THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF BASIL OF CAESAREA

A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth

STEPHEN M. HILDEBRAND

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FOR SARA

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Preface

Basil of Caesarea, the Great, has drawn the admiration of many for centuries, and the variety of the reasons for this admiration testifies to his greatness. He was a Father of Eastern coenobitic monasticism, though Benedict of Nursia revered him as well; an author of orthodox Trinitarian theology and eloquent defender of the Spirit; a model of social virtue and concern for the poor; and an erudite preacher and able bishop.

This study focuses on only one aspect of Basil's legacy: his Trinitarian thought as the fruit both of his study of the Bible and of his Greek education. The work began as a doctoral thesis at Fordham University and has been heavily revised and augmented for publication as a book.

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Abbreviations

Ad Adul.	*Ad Adulescentes*
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
Con. Eun.	*Contra Eunomium*
Con. Sab. et Ar. et An.	*Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos*
CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum
De Sp. S.	*De Spiritu Sancto*
De Syn.	*De Synodis*
Ep.	Epistle
FC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der (drei) ersten Jahrhunderte
H.E.	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
Hex.	*Homiliae in Hexaemeron*
Hom.	Homily
Hom. sup. Pss.	*Homiliae super Psalmos*
Lib. Apol.	*Liber Apologeticus*
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca, ed. J. P. Migne
Progymn.	*Progymnasmata*
SC	Sources chrétiennes

Chronology of Basil's Life and Works

ca. 330	Born in Cappadocia
350–51	Begins studies in Constantinople and Athens
355	Returns to Caesarea
ca. 356	"Conversion" to the ascetic life and travels with Eustathius
357 or 358	Baptized by Dianius and retires to Annesi
December 359	Attends Synod at Constantinople; Eunomius' *Apology*
360–62	Retires a second time to Annesi after a falling out with Dianius; Ep. 361 to Apollinaris
360–65	Ep. 9 to Maximus and *Contra Eunomium*
362	Returns to Caesarea and is reconciled with Dianius; ordained by Eusebius
363	Returns to Annesi after a falling out with Eusebius
365	Returns to Caesarea; is reconciled with Eusebius
370	Becomes bishop of Caesarea after Eusebius' death
After 370	*Ad Adulescentes*
After 372	*Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos*
June 373	Travels to Armenia
August 373	Ep. 125 to Eustathius of Sebaste
373 or 375	*On the Holy Spirit*
Summer 374	Condemns Eustathius of Sebaste and ends their friendship

375 or early 376	Ep. 234–36 to Amphilochius of Iconium
Summer or fall 376	Ep. 214 to Count Terrentius; Ep. 216 to Meletius
Before September 376	Ep. 52 to the *Canonicae*
377–78	*Hexaemeron*
January 1, 379	Dies in Caesarea

THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF BASIL *of* CAESAREA

Introduction

When Alexander the Great conquered Palestine in 323 BC, he brought with him not only Greek rule but also Greek civilization, which endured there through the Roman conquest in 63 BC. This meant that Greek and not Latin was the *lingua franca* of the time well into the Christian era. Greek culture and learning affected the Jews, but the Christians bore its influence more deeply. As first-century Jews, Jesus and his disciples were no strangers to Greek civilization: Jesus probably knew Greek, and the authors of the New Testament wrote in Greek. But because of their mission to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, Christians interacted more intimately than did the Jews with the dominant Greek culture. Moreover, as the Gentile mission spread and succeeded, Christians were less and less bound together by a common race and ethnic background. The intense interaction between Christians and Greeks began soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul had preached the Gospel in Athens, Corinth, and Rome, among other cities in Greece and Asia Minor, before 60 AD, and Peter, too, had preached the Gospel in Rome. These, however, were only the beginnings.

Christianity continued to encounter Greek thought and culture, and the influence of each upon the other has provoked controversy that has yet to find resolution. For many centuries Christians and Greeks alike struggled to judge whether and to what extent their re-

spective beliefs and practices could be amalgamated into a coherent, unified way of living and thinking. Paul preached that the Gospel could accommodate certain of the ways of the Gentiles; James, the brother of the Lord, was not as confident. Justin Martyr held Christianity to be the best philosophy and Plato's teacher, Socrates, to be the first Christian martyr because he gave his life for the truth. Clement of Alexandria explained the concord of Greek and biblical thought by suggesting that Moses taught Plato, and a couple of centuries later Ambrose conjectured that Plato learned from the prophet Jeremiah. Clement's contemporary, Tertullian, did not envision the same harmony and is most famous for asking what "Athens has to do with Jerusalem." Basil of Caesarea takes his place among the many other Fathers who assimilated Greek culture and learning—in a word, *paideia*—to Christianity. Basil's appropriation of *paideia,* moreover, takes center stage in his Trinitarian thought. It is there that Basil artfully combines the Greek and Christian traditions thereby making his own answer to Tertullian's astute question and explaining just what it is that Athens has to do with Jerusalem. Indeed, Basil did respond that Athens has much to do with Jerusalem when he wrote *To Young Men, On How They Might Derive Profit from Pagan Literature.*[1]

Any investigation into how he appropriated Greek learning must begin with Basil's own position on the study of pagan literature. Why should we not understand his use of pagan wisdom as he exhorts these young men to understand it? In *To Young Men* Basil calls for the study of all pagan literature up to the time of the Bible. The youth should study the pagan classics, he says, because it will make good practice. They are in no position, by reason of their age, to contemplate the mysteries of the Scriptures that lead to the blessed life; the study of pagan literature, though, will prepare them for such contemplation, just as soldiers first train with "gymnastic exercises for the arms and

1. Modern evaluations of the work vary. Erich Lamberz details the range of positions on a number of interesting questions; see "Zum Verständnis von Basileios' Schrift, 'Ad Adolescentes,'" 75–95.

dance-steps for the feet" before engaging in combat.[2] Basil's advice, succinctly put, is this: imitate good examples; shun bad ones. On Werner Jaeger's reading, *To Young Men* rejects the moral and religious content of ancient poetry but praises its form. The treatise, however, judges many a pagan worthy of emulation—and therein accepts at least some of the content. Basil employs an oft-cited image that captures his understanding of the issue at hand: "Perhaps just as it is the proper virtue of a tree to be laden with beautiful fruit, although it also wears like a fair raiment leaves that wave about its branches, so likewise the fruit of the soul, the truth is primarily its fruitage, yet it is clad in the certainly not unlovely raiment even of the wisdom drawn from the outside which we may liken to foliage that furnishes both protection to the fruit and an aspect not devoid of beauty."[3] Of this "virtue" or excellence *(aretê)* of the soul the Greeks provide many examples.

To Young Men cannot serve as a template for Basil's appropriation of Greek thought, not so much because he fails to follow his own advice but because of the particular audience and specialized purpose of the work. "*To Young Men,*" Erich Lamberz correctly observes, "is not in the main a treatise on the worth or worthlessness of pagan literature as such."[4] Scholars debate the historical setting of the work. Many think that the "young men" are in fact Basil's nephews because he says that he comes "immediately after [their] parents in natural relationship [tê para tês physeôs oikeiotêti]" so that he has the good will toward them of a father.[5] Ann Moffatt, though, offers an interesting but not coercive argument that they may very well be Christian students in a local school whom Basil served as pastor and father. Moffatt first points out that Basil addresses the work to young teenagers who would soon be graduating to a new phase in their secular education, where conflicts with Christianity would more often arise.[6] Once one realizes

2. *Ad Adul.* 2, trans. Deferrari, 4:383–84.
3. Ibid., 3, trans. Deferrari, 4:385–87.
4. Lamberz, "Zum Verständnis," 81.
5. *Ad Adul.* 1, trans. Deferarri, 4:379.
6. Ann Moffatt, "The Occasion of Basil's Address," 75.

that Basil was "after the manner of a father" to his flock, so the argument goes, these college-bound teens need not be his nephews. Moffatt speculates that Basil may have addressed a group of Christian students at a local school.[7] Not enough evidence exists to demonstrate the truth of this speculation, but it does solve a significant problem with the position that *To Young Men* is a private letter sent to nephews that doubles as a treatise intended for public circulation. *To Young Men* does not fit the genre of a letter; it is rather an oral address.

Scholars likewise dispute the date of the work, for the internal evidence is inconclusive. First of all, Basil had to be old enough to have teenaged nephews or at least to be a father figure to his teenaged parishioners. Secondly, Basil offers his age, training, and experience as a demonstration of his credibility. "The fact that I have reached this age," Basil writes, "and have already been trained through many experiences, and indeed also have shared sufficiently in the all-teaching vicissitude of both good and evil fortune, has made me conversant with human affairs, so that I can indicate the safest road, as it were, to those who are just entering upon life."[8] But on Moffatt's reading, one must suppose only that Basil has been made a priest—and hence father—before giving the address, and this yields a *terminus post quam* of 362.[9] Moffatt further argues that Julian the Apostate's attempt to resurrect paganism furnished the perfect context for Basil's address. By requiring those who taught the classics to believe what they taught, Julian in effect forced the Christians out of the business of secular education. Apollinaris and his father reacted by creating Christian literature to replace the pagan. Basil, though, counseled a different approach: one can study the pagan classics selectively and profitably. He did not create a parochial school system to replace the public one.

Moffatt's proposal, however attractive, fails to explain a couple of important pieces of evidence. First is the fact that she does not account for Basil's statement that he has a "natural relationship" with

7. Ibid., 81.
8. *Ad Adul.* 1, trans. Deferarri, 4:379.
9. Moffatt, "The Occasion of Basil's Address," 82.

his audience. Surely he was a father to his people, but this is not a "natural relationship." Secondly, by her account, Basil must have written *To Young Men* while Julian's edicts were in force. Now, Julian published the laws in question in June of 362 and died a year later. This means that Basil had to give his address in the academic year of 362–63.[10] The problem, however, is that he wrote *To Young Men* not only for students but also for teachers. Sherman Garnett has stressed this fact. Basil's "advice about reading pagan poetry in the light of certain standards assumes an older reader," he writes, "capable of selecting texts" according to the principles outlined in the address.[11] It does not make any sense to write a treatise for Christian teachers who in fact cannot teach. Moreover, Basil's description of his wisdom born of experience gives the impression that he is older.[12]

Basil addresses, here, students and teachers who need advice. He has obviously read and studied the pagan classics more widely than he is advising for these teenagers and their teachers. In *To Young Men* he limits the usefulness of pagan literature to the inculcation of virtue; there is no mention of natural philosophy, metaphysics, or the being of God, though Basil certainly borrowed from the pagans here. He has not written a treatise on the all-encompassing value of pagan literature; rather, as Wendy Helleman points out, he "casts his essay in the traditional role of the encouragement to study philosophy, the protreptic."[13] We cannot take as normative for all what he requires for impressionable students. After all, somebody must read the forbidden books in order to place them on the index for the protection of the untrained, and this is precisely what Basil exemplifies in *To Young Men.* As will be evident at the end of this book, Greek wisdom serves him far more significantly than simply as a pedagogical steppingstone to biblical studies: it is not like the abacus that a child altogether abandons when by it he abstractly grasps addition and subtraction.

10. Ibid., 84.
11. Garnett, "The Christian Young," 212.
12. Lamberz argues for a date after 370; see "Zum Verständnis," 85–86.
13. Helleman, "Basil's *Ad adolescentes,*" 43.

As the debate about the compatibility of Christianity with non-Christian wisdom did not begin with Basil, it did not end with him. It is not an issue of the past, interesting only to the sort of historian who finds his subject matter not necessarily relevant but merely intriguing. Modern Christians concern themselves with the perennial question of Christianity's ability to assimilate forms of thought that are foreign to it, and they answer the question differently. On the one hand are theologians like Karl Barth who shun natural knowledge of God as incompatible with biblical revelation. On the other hand are those like Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, to name a few, who have made use of modern philosophy in their efforts to explain Christianity and to probe its depths.

Moderns not only take up the same question as ancient Christians and answer it as variously; they also offer diverse accounts and judgments of the ancient Christian appropriation of Greek thought. These assessments follow a few patterns that can variously be named the "corruption" theory, the "displacement" theory, and the "hybrid" theory. First, there are those who think that Christianity's involvement with things Greek entails corruption, either the Christian corruption of Hellenism, or vice versa. In ancient times, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, for example, rejected Christianity for defiling ancient culture. Celsus accused the Christians of treason against the empire and the emperor himself, for if all acted like the Christians, "there would be nothing to prevent him [the emperor] from being abandoned, alone and deserted, while earthly things would come into the power of the most lawless and savage barbarians, and nothing more would be heard among men either of [Christian] worship or of the true wisdom."[14] Christianity threatened to ruin all that Celsus cherished.[15] Along these lines, Edward Gibbon's work on the Roman Empire and the role he assigned to Christianity in its demise comes to mind. The

14. Celsus, *The True Doctrine,* in Origen, *Contra Celsum,* 8, 68; trans. Henry Chadwick, 504.

15. E. R. Dodds, though, points out some interesting similarities between pagan *paideia* and Christian theology, especially shared teachings of Origen and Celsus (e.g., monotheism and ethical principles); see *Pagan and Christian,* 116–23.

empire had become weakened by the silly doctrinal squabbles of intolerant Christians. "The flames of the Arian controversy consumed the vitals of the empire . . . [and] the Romans languished under the ignominious tyranny of eunuchs and bishops" who not only ruined the empire but also perverted Christianity itself.[16]

More common, though, is the belief that Hellenism taints the Gospel. Edwin Hatch, who started the scholarly debate over the Hellenization of Christianity in his 1888 Hibbert Lectures,[17] and Adolf von Harnack represent this position. As nineteenth-century liberal Protestants they thought Christianity had more to do with conduct than with belief. Hence, they judged negatively the influence of Greek thought upon it, for the Greeks are responsible for Christianity's wayward emphasis upon belief and dogma.

Frances Young, in her *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture,* presents a new way of looking at the relationship between Greek and Christian thought.[18] There was not a corruption, the one of the other, but rather a "takeover." The Bible displaced pagan texts as that which formed culture. The pagans, through the development of a particular style of education, had for a long time commented upon literature. The Fathers used similar techniques but applied them to another text, the Bible. They drew moral and metaphysical truths from different stories and thereby established a Christian culture that replaced the pagan one.

Basil makes strong statements about the primary place of the Scriptures in the life and education of Christians and monks. He had always urged Gregory of Nazianzus to join him in Pontus where solitude would afford them the successful pursuit of ascetic perfection, and Gregory had often resisted. In Ep. 2, Basil tries so to persuade Gregory and explains the role of the Scriptures in the Christian's life.[19] "A most important path," writes Basil, "to the discovery of duty is also

16. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* 1:327 and 330.
17. Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas.*
18. Young, *Biblical Exegesis.*
19. William Tieck has gathered this and some of the following references; see "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 68–76.

the study of the divinely-inspired Scriptures. For in them are not only found the precepts of conduct, but also the lives of saintly men."[20] He makes much more striking claims. "If what is not of faith," he writes, "is sin, as the Apostle says, and faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of God, then everything that is outside inspired Scripture, being not of faith, is sin."[21] Such statements only confirm the theory that, for Basil, the Scriptures displaced pagan learning.

It is not the case, moreover, that pagan learning has simply been left behind; one can find many a passage where Basil positively rejects it. Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta has collected many such statements from the *Hexaemeron* that reflect not "the personal, real, and practical attitude of Basil towards Greek philosophy and science" but rather his "official" attitude.[22] First of all, Basil points out the mutual opposition and contradiction among the pagan thinkers. "Why," he asks, "should we torment ourselves by refuting the errors or rather the lies of the Greek philosophers, when it is sufficient to produce and compare their mutually contradictory books, and, as quiet spectators, to watch their internecine war?"[23] Basil condemns pagan thinkers with Romans 1:22—"claiming to be wise, they became fools." "Let us avoid," he exhorts his congregation, "the nonsense of those arrogant philosophers who do not blush to liken their own soul to the soul of a dog; who say that they have been formerly themselves women, shrubs, fishes."[24] Basil's irony here is heavy. "Have they ever been fishes?" he asks. "I do not know but I do not fear to affirm very strongly that in their writings they show themselves more irrational and more nonsensical than fishes."[25] More than foolish and contradictory, the wise of the world are sinfully vain[26] and uselessly curious.[27] De Mendieta sums up Basil's attitude toward the Greeks in the *Hexaemeron:* it is one of

20. Ep. 2, 3 (Courtonne 1:8, 1–6); trans. Deferrari 1:15.
21. *Morals* 80, 22; trans. Clarke, 129.
22. De Mendieta, "The Official Attitude of Basil," 27.
23. *Hex.* 3, 8 (PG 29, 73B–C); trans. de Mendieta, 31. De Mendieta's translations here (his own) are livelier than Way's. For more texts on the same theme, see *Hex.* 1, 2 and 1, 11.
24. *Hex.* 8, 2, (PG 29, 168A–B); trans. de Mendieta, 37.
25. Ibid. See also *Hex.* 1, 3; 3, 3; and 8, 2. 26. See *Hex.* 1, 4 and 9, 1.
27. See *Hex.* 1, 8 and 1, 9.

"contempt, a very severe and exaggerated judgment of complete condemnation of a philosophy and science, which are held up to ridicule, because they are useless, foolish, insane, and full of vain curiosity."[28]

Those who want to say that the Bible replaced pagan texts as the driving force behind culture must nonetheless reckon with the deeply Greek character of the Fathers and, in this case, of Basil. William Tieck, writing long before Frances Young, offers a way to understand Basil's use of ancient *paideia* that in no way compromises the centrality of the Bible. "In the final analysis," he writes, Basil drew from the Scriptures "his basic resources of thought and expression and action." He continues: "In large measure Holy Writ provides his vocabulary and moulds his phraseology. It motivates his deepest drives, and furnishes the materials out of which his whole spiritual habitation is built. Even when they display the strongest marks of sophistic and secular influence, his thought, his style, his motives and his methods all remain primarily bibliocentric."[29]

Tieck, though, admits—and one cannot deny it—that Basil's thought is "saturated with philosophic content" from beginning to end.[30] How is this reconcilable with Basil the bibliocentrist? There is some underlying tension, but Tieck posits that Basil's use of philosophy is largely unwilling and unwitting, that it has an unconscious place and power in his thought.[31] A careful study of Basil's use of ancient *paideia,* however, does not support this theory. Nor is his recourse to Greek philosophy and to science merely defensive—weapons that he is loath to use except when dire circumstances demand it. Basil "became hellenised *ad unguem,*" de Mendieta writes, "and he gladly and abundantly used the Greek philosophers and even scientists, in spite of what he said officially, and in spite of his public and perhaps conventional attitude of contempt."[32] It is better to adopt a view of Scriptural and Greek thought in Basil's works that is more consistent with his practice.

28. De Mendieta, "The Official Attitude of Basil," 29.
29. Tieck, "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 71.
30. Ibid., 86.
31. Ibid.
32. De Mendieta, "The Official Attitude of Basil," 28.

Our way of analyzing ancient *paideia* and biblical teaching must not be misled by the Fathers' (Basil included) reluctance to admit dependence upon nonbiblical sources and by their insistent calls to reject worldly wisdom. Werner Jaeger rightly points out this reticence. "In their words," he writes, "they keep attacking Hellenism for its weaknesses, but in their own imitation of Greek culture they show how this polemical judgment must be modified."[33] Basil, for example, condemns Eunomius for his debt to Aristotle, all the while himself likewise owing. This is why the Fathers' appropriation of *paideia* must be studied as a matter of practice rather than theory, and it is why one must read Basil's homilies, letters, and dogmatic treatises rather than only *To Young Men* and the anti-Hellenistic invective in the *Hexaemeron*. Basil uses pagan learning in ways he does not mention there.

In the light of all this, it is best to understand Christianity's encounter with Hellenism not as a corruption or a displacement but as an assimilation of the one with the other based upon an appeal to transcendent universal truth. The result of the assimilation is a hybrid of sorts, and the hybrid is brought about not by the necessary laws of history or those governing institutions but by particular teachers. The emphasis here is on the particular problems faced by a certain Father at a certain time and how he brings coherence and unity to the disparate authorities or sources of truth that command his allegiance. The teaching of such a Father could be called syncretistic only if it were also incoherent and heterogeneous, only if it suffered falsity to accompany whatever truth it possessed.

The hybrid model has an advantage over the corruption and displacement models. The latter make a universal claim; they propose a way to understand every Father's appropriation of Greek thought. A universal claim, though, is a two-edged sword, and this case is no exception. While it allows for the comprehension of the entire patristic age—if the claim is in fact true—it does not accommodate the important differences among the Fathers in their ways of dealing with

33. Jaeger, *Early Christianity,* 81.

Greek thought. The hybrid model has the opposite virtues and vices. It gains insight into the thought of one Father but makes no claim on others or, even less, on the whole patristic age.

Along the sort of lines represented by this hybrid model, Jaeger sees not only the Christian assumption of *paideia* but also the development of *paideia* among the Greeks themselves throughout the many centuries before Christ. Jaeger's great three-volume work, *Paideia,* traces this latter insight from Homer to Demosthenes.[34] As he sees it, the Greek understanding of *paideia* evolves; something of the older understanding is brought into the new and thus is not entirely abandoned. Plato, for example, transcends Homer but does not replace him. Something similar happens in the Christian fourth century. "Christianity," through the Cappadocian Fathers, writes Werner Jaeger, "now emerges as the heir to everything in the Greek tradition that seemed worthy of survival."[35] Basil's good friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, displays a rhetorical and cultural erudition unmatched by Basil and his brother Gregory of Nyssa—if not by all the Fathers, as well. Nazianzus' "homilies are full of classical allusions," writes Jaeger. "He has a full command of Homer, Hesiod, the tragic poets, Pindar, Aristophanes, the Attic orators, the Alexandrian modernists, but also of Plutarch and Lucian and the writers of the Second Sophistic movement."[36] If Nazianzus was the great Christian appropriator of Greek culture and rhetoric (the "Christian Demosthenes"), Gregory of Nyssa was that of Greek philosophy. Here Basil is always ranked behind the other Cappadocians, but his *To Young Men* drew much admiration. Indeed, *To Young Men* "was the charter of all Christian higher education for centuries to come."[37] As will become ever clearer, though, an accurate assessment of Basil's work must go beyond *To Young Men,* however influential it was.

Basil's works on the Trinity provide an illuminating opportunity to observe him in practice. His theology represents neither a corrup-

34. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture.*
35. Jaeger, *Early Christianity,* 75. 36. Ibid., 78.
37. Ibid., 81.

tion of biblical truth nor a displacement of *paideia* but an assimilation of Scriptural teaching on Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with what he judges to be true in Greek thought. Both the biblical and philosophical traditions to which Basil turned in order to articulate his understanding of the Trinity are crucial; any presentation of his Trinitarian theology that leaves out one or the other will be incomplete. Basil's Trinitarian theology, then, exemplifies the particular way in which he appropriated Greek *paideia.*

According to most scholars, Basil developed the Trinitarian thought of his time by refining the language used of God, thereby making it suitable to express both his unity and his triplicity. Basil is credited with pressing the Greek language into the service of the Gospel by developing technical terms that guard the proper understanding of the Trinity. It is tempting to say that, on the one hand, Scripture teaches Basil the mysteries that technical theological language expresses and explains and that, on the other hand, technical language makes the ambiguous Scriptures more precise. It is even more tempting to say that the right interpretation of Scripture is guiding the process by which sophisticated language is deemed suitable to express the biblical truth, so that the Scriptures would act as a "winnower," separating, in the possible ways of thinking about and speaking of God, the wheat from the chaff.

But this would oversimplify the quite complex relationship between scriptural exegesis and philosophical language. Neither the Scriptures nor *paideia* holds a simple precedence over the other in Basil's theology. The question of the priority of the Bible or of Greek thought is in many ways a wrongheaded question. It presumes a very simple understanding of the relationship between Greek *paideia* and biblical teaching, as though Greek speakers of the fourth century (or anyone else for that matter) could read and understand the Bible without any presuppositions, as though Basil were not immersed in classical thought and culture until after he experienced the pure unadulterated teaching of the Scriptures. There are at least two problems with the claim that Basil or anyone else received untainted messages of the

Scriptures. First is the untenable assumption that the Scriptures are perspicuous. The Fathers are in universal agreement on this point, and Origen and Augustine speculate that the Lord purposefully made the Scriptures obscure so as to sustain our interest, as in a puzzle. After all, Christians have argued the meaning of the Scriptures since they were written and have achieved no consensus; commentaries explaining their meaning would fill the largest of libraries. The second problem is that even if the Scriptures were unambiguous—even if they were not filled with uncertainty and apparent contradiction—they would have to be clear *to someone.* That is to say, their perspicuity would nonetheless make demands upon the reader. The reader would, of course, at least have to be able to read and to read different genres. The reader would have to be able to recognize certain turns of phrase and figures of speech. That reader would also require faith in order to understand readily the meaning of Scripture. In short, the Scriptures could not be perspicuous without requiring some sort of education on the part of the reader, and this education, in turn, would affect the way in which the Scriptures were read and interpreted. In a complex fashion, then, Basil's education influenced how he read the Scriptures and how he expressed the truth that they taught him. There is no facile way of discerning in Basil's thought the respective roles of Scripture and *paideia,* though judgments are not thereby impossible.

Basil is obviously not a philosopher in the proper sense of the term. He was no Marius Victorinus, a philosopher who became a Christian and then a theologian. Basil did not write purely philosophical works or even systematic theological ones like Origen's *On First Principles.* This is not to say that Basil did not approach the Scriptural text with certain philosophical assumptions. It is to say, though, that the goal of Basil's work was to explain biblical revelation, not the natural world or the gods of the philosophers. He understood theology as a response to God's self-disclosing acts, not as the mind's unaided comprehension of the divine essence.[38] Basil's strongest arguments for the divin-

38. John Behr takes this to be one of Basil's primary objections to the Eunomians; see *The Nicene Faith,* 282–90.

ity of the Son and the Spirit, we will see, take as their point of departure the activity of God in the economy of salvation revealed in the Scriptures. The Bible, then, has a certain priority in his thought: not a simplistic, hermeneutically naive priority that regards Greek *paideia* as irrelevant or the Scriptures as easily accessible, but a priority nonetheless, for Basil is concerned above all to explain truths, especially the Trinity and its acts for human salvation, that come only through revelation.

Basil led a most interesting life during one of the most exciting times in the history of the Church for a bishop and theologian. Never were the theological and doctrinal matters more important. Seldom were the consequences of taking a stand so severe: opposing imperial authority or popular piety could bring much suffering and even death. Basil's life involved religious conversion and monastic zeal, theological controversy, ecclesiastical intrigue, and broken, damaged, and repaired friendship, all of which served as the context for his synthesis of Greek and biblical truth.

A Note on Labels

The following chapters require the use of certain labels, some ancient, some modern. It is now common and true to say both that choosing categories to understand fourth-century theology is difficult and that traditional (and some modern) categories are misleading.[39] The ancient labels "Arian" and "Semi-Arian" and the modern label "Neo-Arian"[40] overstate the importance of Arius and his theology. Arius himself represented a larger theological tradition, and he was not its most important representative.[41] Moreover, his thought is not the source of the theology that has been called "Semi-Arian" and "Neo-

39. See Lienhard, "The 'Arian' Controversy," 416–20; Wiles, "Attitudes to Arius," 31–43; and Behr, *The Nicene Faith,* 21–36.

40. Wiles notes that "Neo-Arian" is a "modern name, bestowed by Albertz in 1909 as a replacement for the title Anomaean which he regarded as a misleading title given to them by their opponents"; see Wiles, "Attitudes to Arius," 42.

41. See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 13–14.

Arian." It was Athanasius and Marcellus, in fact, who created "Arianism" by so labeling their various theological opponents.[42] Maurice Wiles cleverly summed it up when he wrote, "the dead Arius was not even a whipping boy, but a whip."[43]

While it is very useful to use Nicaea as a central category, one must not do so anachronistically. "Old-Nicene," "Nicene," and "Neo-Nicene"[44] can wrongly assume that Nicaea's importance was universally recognized from the start. Athanasius, for example, insisted on its authority beginning some twenty years after the event of Nicaea. "Nicene" and "Non-Nicene," though, are very useful when used to designate, respectively, those theologies comfortably expressed in the Nicene Creed or those that are absent from it.[45] Here the key is not Nicaea's authority,[46] but its very words. Marcellus, Alexander of Alexandria, and Eustathius of Antioch, for instance, had no trouble signing the creed; Eusebius of Caesarea, on the other hand, felt compelled to defend and explain himself. "Pro-Nicene"[47] and "Anti-Nicene" are helpful categories especially referring to events beginning around the middle of the century, when the council became both ever more revered and reviled. "Old-Nicene" is useful to designate those theologies that found easy expression in the language of the Creed of Nicaea (Eustathius of Antioch's and Marcellus of Ancyra's are good examples). The term contrasts these theologies with later Nicene theologies that did not necessarily derive from them.[48]

Sometimes labels are derived from theological positions. Joseph

42. See Lyman, "A Topography of Heresy," 45–62.

43. Wiles, "Attitudes to Arius," 43.

44. "Neo-Nicene" often carries the weight of its origin: it was first used to designate Theodor Zahn's and Adolf von Harnack's misinterpretation of Cappadocian theology as really "Semi-Arian" tritheism; see Ayers, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 237.

45. On "Nicene," see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 98–100.

46. Michel Barnes argues that Nicaea became orthodoxy only in 381; see Barnes, "The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon," 62.

47. The term Pro-Nicene, though, is used in different senses by different authors. Ayres' use is straightforward; Barnes', is not. See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 236–40, and Barnes, *The Power of God,* 169–72. For Barnes, for example, Athanasius is a Neo-Nicene, Gregory of Nyssa, a Pro-Nicene.

48. See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 168.

Lienhard's *mia-* and *dyohypostatic* traditions, for example, illuminate very well the thought of a number of significant theologians, especially Marcellus, Athanasius, the Eusebii, Asterius, and Arius. Lienhard traces the dyohypostatic tradition up to Basil of Ancyra and like-minded bishops.[49] After this point, theologians continue to say that God the Father and Son are two *hypostases,* but the dyohypostatic tradition as such loses some of its distinguishing traits. As Lienhard himself put it, "after 361 the categories 'miahypostatic theology' and 'dyohypostatic theology' lose their relevance."[50]

Hypostasis was not the only key theological term. We can also speak of *Homoousians,*[51] *Homoiousians,*[52] *Homoians,*[53] *Anhomoians,*[54] and *Heteroousians.*[55] These categories are useful insofar as they accurately describe many theologians' positions. They can be overextended, however. "Homoousian" is sometimes applied too early; for example, in 325 Athanasius cannot be called an Homoousian, for the name had not yet attained the importance that it later would. There is also the fact that *homoousios* held different meanings for different people, e.g., Marcellus and Athanasius. "Anhomoian" has also been misapplied to Eunomius and Aëtius. As we will see, they did not deny that the Son is like the Father; he is unlike the Father, they say, only in essence.

Finally, some labels are derived from persons: Lucianists, Eusebians,[56] Marcellans, (neo-) Sabellians, Eunomians, Eustathians, and Paulinians. These labels do not provide insight into the controversy as a

49. Lienhard, "The 'Arian' Controversy," 433–34.
50. Ibid., 437.
51. Those who understood the Son to be the "same in being" with the Father.
52. Those who understood the Son to be "like in being" with the Father.
53. Those who understood the Son to be "like" the Father.
54. Those who understood the Son to be "unlike" the Father.
55. Those who understood the Son to be "unlike" the Father "in being."
56. "Eusebians" would work particularly well for describing a group of individuals—theologically close, if not identical with one another—formed to support Arius and to oppose Marcellus. Joseph Lienhard points out one problem with using this term as a major category: it lacks a suitable counterpart; see "The 'Arian' Controversy," 419–20. There is also the fact that the Eusebian coalition began to break up in the 350s, and, so, the category cannot be used in any meaningful way to describe the events and theology of the second half of the fourth century.

whole but are very useful for describing the distinct, smaller groups that make up the larger traditions.

Obviously, then, the various labels and categories should be used self-consciously and with historical and theological sensitivity. Old labels continue to be used with new meanings, or at least with certain biases and prejudices carved away, and there is no harm in that.[57]

57. Ayres cites the example of Basil Studer's rehabilitation of "Neo-Nicene"; see *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 238. There is also the fact that the authors of *Arianism after Arius,* who are devoted to a more accurate presentation of fourth-century theology, do not employ a consistent terminology. Some, as an example, avoid "Neo-Arian" while others use the term, but not uncritically.

CHAPTER 1

The Life of Basil

Basil of Caesarea was born around 330 in a time of dogmatic turmoil in the Church. In 319, about ten years before Basil's birth, Arius and his bishop, Alexander, began to dispute the status of the Son. Arius held that the Son had a beginning, before which he was not. For Arius, moreover, to beget is to create, and he claimed that the Son was begotten or created from nothing. If the Son were uncreated, Arius reasoned, if he were always existing, then the Son would also be ungenerate and unbegotten, just as the Father is; the result would be a Son who is a Father and a second first principle beside the Father, and this is absurd. Arius' metaphysics demands that the Son once not exist, for there cannot be two always-existing persons *and* one source of all. For Arius, the eternal existence of the Son entails metaphysical dualism. Alexander opposed Arius' understanding of the Father and the Son. The Son, he urged, is not created from nothing and is not created at all. His generation, moreover, cannot be described. What divine begetting is, cannot be known, but to beget—at least on God's part—is not to create. The controversy in Alexandria between Alexander and Arius soon spread, eventually enveloping the whole Church.

Emperors did not look kindly upon doctrinal division in the Church, and Constantine took pains to heal the division created by

Arius. It strikes the modern mind as peculiar and out of place for a head of state to become involved directly in religious matters, but it was by no means odd in the fourth century. Constantine was charged with the care of the state, and it was believed that God would punish the state with famine, invasion, and other such maladies if unity of belief and cult were lacking among the citizens. Under these circumstances, Constantine had the duty and the right to intervene in ecclesiastical matters, and he did so. In 325 he called a council at Nicaea whose aim was to restore doctrinal harmony to the Church by the unambiguous rejection of the teaching of Arius and the punishment of those who refused to abandon that teaching. Nicaea, however, failed to bring peace to the Church, and the conflict worsened.

Such was the Church into which Basil was born. His work helped to bring to an end the division in the Church, but he did not live to see it. He died on January 1, 379, around two years before the Council of Constantinople, which, unlike the Council of Nicaea, at last brought tranquillity and unity of faith.

After receiving his first schooling in Caesarea, around 350–51, Basil moved on to study rhetoric, first in Constantinople and then in Athens. In 355 he returned to Caesarea to teach rhetoric. A year or so later, Basil's encounter with Eustathius of Sebaste radically changed his life. Just when Basil's religious spirit awakened, he found someone who modeled for him the path on which he should himself embark. Looking back on his youth and interpreting his own experiences, Basil writes: "Having lavished much time on vanity, and having consumed almost all my youth in futility, which were mine while I occupied myself with the acquirement of the precepts of that wisdom made foolish by God, when one day arising as from a deep sleep I looked out upon the marvelous light of the truth of the gospel, and beheld the uselessness of the wisdom 'of the princes of this world that come to nought' [1 Cor 2:6], bemoaning much my piteous life, I prayed that there be given me a guidance to the introduction to the teachings of religion."[1] This guid-

1. Ep. 223, 2 (Courtonne, 3:10, 1–10); trans. Deferrari, 3:291–93 (altered).

ance in the religious life that Basil sought was given him by Eustathius of Sebaste. Eustathius was both a bishop and an ascetic, combining pastoral responsibility with ascetic discipline; he was a man of the Church but not of the world, a man "who wished to make the Church as much a force for social change as for cultic enthusiasm, and who certainly wished to inject into Christian experience a degree of moral seriousness that would affect public life as well as personal development."[2] Basil, following Eustathius, traveled to Coele-Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Egypt to acquaint himself with the ascetic practices of those regions.[3] Upon returning from this trip, ca. 357, Basil was baptized by Dianius in Caesarea and retired to Pontus where Gregory of Nazianzus joined him in his pursuit of the ascetic life.

Fresh out of school and young in the serious practice of his faith, Basil accompanied Eustathius of Sebaste and Basil of Ancyra in their cause against the Eunomians at a synod in Constantinople in 359.[4] Aëtius of Antioch and Eunomius of Cyzicus taught a doctrine more radical than Arius'. They claimed to know the essence of God, which they termed unbegottenness, and thus deduced that the Son must be unlike the Father in essence. Basil of Ancyra led a movement in response to the Eunomians. He and his followers, including Eustathius of Sebaste, rejected the dissimilarity of the Son to the Father and preferred to say that the Son is "like the Father in essence"; hence, those of this line of thought are called Homoiousians or Semi-Arians, as Epiphanius has it. Scholars often mention that Basil was in the train of Basil of Ancyra, but he was closer to Eustathius.

We should not assume, however, that Basil shared their theological tradition. Johannes Zachhuber insightfully argues that Basil's ambivalence about *homoousios* and even his remarks about *homoios* language do not of themselves make the early Basil a three-*hypostaseis* theologian as Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius of Sebaste clearly are. As we

2. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 75.
3. See Ep. 223, 2 (Courtonne, 3:10, 20–11, 35).
4. See Philostorgius, *H. E.* 4, 12.

will see later, Basil does not use the word *hypostasis* in his early writings when he wants to insist on the distinctions among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he never subordinates the Son to the Father in order to secure the Son's distinction from the Father.[5] This lack of subordinationism and Basil's attitude toward *hypostasis* meant he moved in theological circles distinct from those with whom he attended the 359 synod in Constantinople.

At this synod, Basil suffered a rude introduction to the theological disputes of his time and, not yet even a priest, was thrown into the fire of ecclesiastical politics. There was to be a theological debate between the very well-practiced rhetorician Aëtius and a representative of the opposition. The lot seemed to have fallen to Basil. Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius hoped that Basil's newly honed powers of speech would prevail against Aëtius, but Basil, Philostorgius tells us, "from natural timidity and shyness . . . shrunk from public discussions [and] drew back from public contests," and his friends excused him saying that "it was indecorous for bishops to contend with a deacon concerning the doctrines of the faith."[6] In fact, as Eunomius has it, Basil fled the council altogether. Gregory of Nyssa relates Eunomius' words: "Then, he [Eunomius] says, a trial in which he would have had to run for his very life was put into the hands of certain arbitrators, to whom our Teacher and Master who was present gave his charge; and as all the voting power was thus won over to the enemies' side, he yielded the position, fled from the place, and hunted everywhere for some hearth and home."[7] Reeling from this experience, and distressed by Dianius' signing of the creed issued by the synod in Constantinople, Basil withdrew until 362 to his family's home at Annesi in the Pontus Valley, between Caesarea and the Black Sea.

Basil's first taste of ecclesiastical controversy, though sour, did not prevent him from a continual effort to involve himself in the matters

5. Zachhuber, "Basil and the Three-Hypostases Tradition," 65–85.
6. Philostorgius, *H. E.* 4, 12 (GCS, 57:64, 5–26); trans. Walford, 467–68.
7. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1, 9; NPNF 2, 5: 43.

of the Church. Basil's understanding of the ascetic life did not lead him to withdrawal from ecclesiastical affairs but rather obliged him to use his talents for the benefit of the Church as a whole. It is no surprise, then, that Basil was eventually ordained. In the middle of 362, Basil returned to Caesarea to be reconciled with the dying Dianius and to serve as a priest for whoever was elected his successor. Eusebius, the new bishop of Caesarea, ordained Basil; but they had a falling out, and Basil returned to Annesi until 365.

In the early 360s, Basil wrote his first dogmatic work, *Against Eunomius.*[8] This work is Basil's response to Eunomius' *Apology,* delivered in 359 (at the council that met in Constantinople) and published around 360.[9] This is Basil's first theological work, and G. L. Prestige opines that it is "rather too strongly marked with the arrogance of a clever young man getting into print for the first time."[10] Basil's style, though, should not overshadow the real achievement of *Against Eunomius:* in this work and for the first time Basil formulates a theological vision that will remain the basis of his Trinitarian thought even as it develops throughout the rest of his life. Just a few years before his death, Basil wrote letters that reflected the theological vision of *Against Eunomius.*[11]

While Basil was at Annesi, Valens, unfriendly to the Nicene cause, ascended to power, and in 365 Basil returned to Caesarea to help Eusebius fight heresy and care for the people of Caesarea. Basil did not write much between his return to Caesarea and the death of Eusebius in June of 370. During this time and later, he spent himself to form the Christians in Caesarea so that they would give flesh to his theological ideas about the nature of a Christian community. Basil's efforts to alleviate the suffering caused by the famine of 369 and to bring about

8. On the date of *Against Eunomius,* see appendix 2.

9. On the date of Eunomius' *Apology,* see Wickham, "The Date of Eunomius' *Apology,*" 231–40. Wickham refined the work of Franz Diekamp (Diekamp, "Literargeschichtliches"), and Kopecek, in turn, refined that of Wickham (Kopecek, *A History,* 305).

10. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 24.

11. See Ep. 234–36.

a Christian social order culminated in the well-known *Basileiados,* a series of buildings that Gregory of Nazianzus termed the "new city" where the poor and ill were cared for and fed.[12]

After Eusebius died, and after a controverted election, Basil became the bishop of Caesarea late in 370. Basil's own uncle opposed his appointment, as did many of the bishops assembled for the election. Nor did Basil have the support of all the laity. In addition to this opposition, there was an air of illegitimacy surrounding Basil's eventual election because it was effected by the power of his friends, namely, Gregory of Nazianzus and his father of the same name.

The difficulty of Basil's election proved an omen for the first half of his episcopacy, which may be viewed as a series of struggles. The first occurred in 372 when Basil's diocese was divided and his power thereby diminished. The city of Tyana became the capital of the new province, and Anthimus, the bishop of Tyana, asserted himself as its metropolitan. Anthimus and Basil eventually worked out some of their differences, at least for a time. Basil, however, suffered not only a challenge to his episcopal power; the division of his diocese was also the occasion for the near ruin of his friendship with Gregory of Nazianzus. Basil had tried to limit the effects of the division upon his ecclesiastical power by appointing new bishops at select sees. He appointed his brother to Nyssa and his friend to Sasima. Gregory of Nazianzus deeply resented this appointment and accused Basil of pressing friendship into the service of power politics. Even in his panegyric on Basil, he wrote that Basil had made him "an appendage to this scheme." Gregory exuberantly praises Basil, comparing him to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, John the Baptist, and the Apostle Peter, among others. But in this otherwise lavish encomium, Gregory feels compelled to say, "Greatly as I admire his whole conduct, to an extent indeed beyond my powers of expression, of this single particular I find it impossible to approve. . . . I mean the change and faithlessness of

12. See Daley, "Building a New City," 431–61 and Karayannopoulos, "St. Basil's Social Activity," 375–92.

his treatment of myself, a cause of pain which even time has not obliterated."[13] Time, however, did assuage Gregory's pain, for the words of his panegyric lack the poignancy of those he had earlier written to Basil: "I shall gain this only from your friendship, that I shall learn not to trust in friends, or to esteem anything more valuable than God."[14] In fact, Gregory never went to Sasima. In the end, Basil and Gregory were able to preserve their friendship, though never again were they of one heart as when they studied together in Athens and retreated together at Annesi.

Basil's struggle for ecclesiastical influence was quickly followed by another struggle, one more doctrinal in nature but still involving the ruin of friendship, this time with Eustathius of Sebaste. In the winter of 371–72 or 372–73, the emperor Valens visited Caesarea and commissioned Basil to travel to Armenia in order to strengthen the position of the Church there and, by extension, that of the empire, too. Also around 372 Basil received a letter from Meletius of Antioch, who was exiled to Getasa, and Theodotus of Nicopolis, in Armenia. They wanted Basil to address a problem that had arisen with Eustathius' teaching on the Holy Spirit. So, in June of 373, Basil set out for Armenia with his commission from the emperor, also aiming to resolve this new personal and doctrinal dispute.[15] On his way to Getasa to meet Meletius and Theodotus, Basil met with Eustathius and obtained from him a confession of faith.[16] This signed confession did not ease the worries of Meletius or, especially, of Theodotus. As a result, a cloud of suspicion hung over Basil himself, and Theodotus was reluctant to associate with him. Basil finally condemned Eustathius in no uncertain terms in the summer of 374, thereby preserving his relationship with the bishops of Armenia but bitterly acknowledging the loss of his friendship with Eustathius.

13. Nazianzus, *The Panegyric on St. Basil,* NPNF, 2, 7:414.

14. Nazianzus, Ep. 48; NPNF 2, 7:453.

15. There are problems with the exact chronology of these events; see Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 13–16 and Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 241.

16. See Ep. 125.

So, Basil's friendship with Eustathius had to be sacrificed to preserve both his own authority on the question of the Holy Spirit and his relationship with the bishops of Armenia. But Eustathius himself also challenged Basil's orthodoxy. Thus the struggle among Basil, Theodotus, and Eustathius over the Holy Spirit spawned yet another between Basil and Eustathius over Apollinaris. Apollinaris, who is most notorious for his Christological error of denying the human mind of Jesus, ardently defended the Council of Nicaea and the full divinity of the Son. Eustathius unjustly charged Apollinaris with the Sabellian heresy (whereby the eternal distinctions between the persons of the Trinity are destroyed or explained away) and implicated Basil by association. The followers of Eustathius circulated a document, which they claimed Basil had written, as evidence of Basil's association with Apollinaris and his alleged theological errors.

In response to these unfounded accusations against Apollinaris and against himself, Basil first distanced himself from both Apollinaris and the document being circulated by the Eustathians. He conceded that Apollinaris came close to Sabellianism and insisted that the document in the possession of the Eustathians was authored by Apollinaris himself and not by him.[17] Basil then changed his story a bit. In a letter to Olympius (Ep. 131), he claimed that Apollinaris had written only parts of the document and that other arguments in it were drawn from an unknown author.[18] Furthermore, Basil admitted having exchanged letters with Apollinaris but before the latter fell into error. Basil knew that his enemies could not produce the correspondence in question, and he insisted that his communication with Apollinaris was over nothing significant.[19] The Eustathian charges against Basil made still more difficult an already difficult episcopacy. As ecclesiastical conflict had led Basil to be less than true to Gregory of Nazianzus, so it also happened with Apollinaris. Rather than rally-

17. See Ep. 129.
18. See Ep. 131, 1 (Courtonne, 2:44, 17–45, 21).
19. See Ep. 224, 2 (Courtonne, 3:19, 12–23).

ing to Apollinaris' defense, Basil publicly distanced himself from him and even admitted a certain closeness between Apollinaris' theology and Sabellianism. At the same time, however, Basil wrote that he did not believe the charges against Apollinaris, that he did not consider him an enemy, and that he respected him.[20] Basil and Apollinaris had very different theologies, and Basil was right to deny their full like-mindedness on theological matters.[21] Nonetheless, for the sake of salvaging his own reputation, Basil exaggerated both his personal distance from Apollinaris and their lack of theological communion; he let Apollinaris bear the full weight of false accusations so as to clear himself of the same.

In the final struggle of Basil's episcopate, he endeavored to unite the moderate factions of the Church against those whom he considered extreme: the Arians, to use his categories, on the one hand, and the Sabellians or Marcellians on the other.[22] Basil could defeat these two heresies if he could get the Westerners, Athanasius and the Egyptians, and the Antiochenes to agree with his Trinitarian language, condemn Marcellus, and recognize Meletius (who was likeminded with Basil) instead of Paulinus as the rightful bishop of Antioch. They were willing to do none of this. Basil wrote five letters to Athanasius within a year trying to persuade him to acquiesce to his plan to unify the Church.[23] Athanasius never responded to Basil's letters, and his lack of response indicates what he thought of Basil's plan. Basil wrote to a friend about Athanasius "that it is impossible to promote or accomplish any of those things which are necessary [including the condemnation of Marcellus] by means of letters from me."[24] Athanasius would not budge, and Basil's design for a unified Church foundered.

Such were the problems that Basil experienced in his episcopacy. Both he and his friends suffered a great deal as he struggled to estab-

20. See Ep. 223, 5 (Courtonne, 3:15, 36–38) and Ep. 244, 3 (Courtonne, 3:76, 3–4).
21. See Ep. 244, 3 (Courtonne, 3:76, 3–4).
22. See Lienhard, "*Ousia* and *Hypostasis,*" 118–20.
23. See Ep. 66, 67, 69, 80, 82.
24. Ep. 89, 2.

lish his own authority and identity as a bishop and to bring older relationships into this new role. It was difficult for Basil the bishop to relate well with old friends and teachers. He fared much better with relationships that he started after he had already become a bishop, and the most important of these was that with Amphilochius of Iconium.

Around 373 Amphilochius became the bishop of Iconium. Basil was something of a father to Amphilochius and guided him in his pursuit of the ascetic life. Amphilochius, like Basil himself, would "have need also of a great and experienced teacher" in the "task of cleansing the eye of the soul, so that, when once freed, as from a kind of rheum, from all the darkness of ignorance, it may be able to look steadily upon the beauty of the glory of God, [which] calls, I judge, for no small labour and brings no small benefit."[25] Basil urged him to find holiness not in the withdrawal from society, among the caves and the rocks that ascetics were wont to make home, but in service to it.[26]

More than a spiritual father to Amphilochius, Basil served also as his teacher. Many of Basil's letters to him respond to theological or ecclesiastical questions. First of all, to this group of letters belong the famous "canonical letters."[27] Secondly, Basil's Ep. 233–36 to Amphilochius sum up a great deal of his theological thought in its mature form. They were written after *On the Holy Spirit* and recapitulate the theological vision of *Against Eunomius.* Finally, it was to Amphilochius of Iconium that Basil dedicated *On the Holy Spirit.* Amphilochius was interested in what Basil had to say on theological matters, and Basil responded in kind. It is important that Basil wrote *On the Holy Spirit* at this time in his life;[28] most of his theological development and most of his episcopal struggles were now over. Philip Rousseau nicely sums up this time in Basil's life: "[The writing of *On the Holy Spirit*] marked

25. See Ep. 150, 1 (Courtonne, 2:72, 22–29); trans. Deferrari, 2:363.
26. See Ep. 150, 4 (Courtonne, 2:75, 10–16).
27. See Ep. 188, 199, and 217.
28. Fedwick dates *On the Holy Spirit* to 373 and 375; see Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 16–17.

a moment of new assurance, of self-definition, of choice in Basil's life. The turmoil of the years since 370 was now made sense of. Friendship had been lost or modified, opportunities rejected or forgotten. Challenges had been faced—not just those of the Arians but those mounted by Eustathius, and by those opposed to his style of episcopacy, his asceticism, his notion of what 'Church' should mean."[29] So, Basil wrote *On the Holy Spirit* at a time of theological and ecclesiastical maturity in his life, at a time when he had grown confident in what he wanted to say about God and about being a bishop and living the Christian life.

Although in the later years of his episcopacy Basil found solace in his friendship with Amphilochius, he died with most of his goals unaccomplished. In 379 the church in Armenia was not free of trouble; he had not secured the help or confidence of Athanasius and the West; Marcellus remained uncondemned; and Meletius was not recognized as the rightful bishop of Antioch. Basil himself had given up on some of these goals before his death. In his relationship with Athanasius and Meletius and in his pursuit to secure the universal condemnation of Marcellus, Basil was trying to bring doctrinal and ecclesiological peace and unity to Christians. This unity was eventually brought about, but not quite in the way that Basil had envisioned. Basil played a part in calming the doctrinal storm besieging the Church, not so much through his political efforts (which failed) but through his theological work. As later chapters will bear out, Basil laid the theological foundation upon which Trinitarian orthodoxy in the East was established.

Though Basil's episcopacy drew to a close with these goals unrealized (for reasons mostly outside his control), amidst them stands Basil's last literary accomplishment, his nine sermons on the *Hexaemeron.* These sermons justly have received much attention and have become, rightly or wrongly, the primary source for Basil's ideas about the interpretation of Scripture. Historians have not been able to ascertain with certainty when Basil wrote the *Hexaemeron,* but a date within a couple of years (377–78) of his death is not unreasonable.[30]

29. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 241.

30. See, for example, ibid., 360–63.

The many struggles and hardships of Basil's episcopacy and his unrealized goals should not lessen our estimation of his accomplishments and his importance to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is simply that many of the problems that Basil was trying to resolve were larger than he and larger than his work. He contributed to their resolution but did not live to see it; there is no failure in that. Indeed, Basil's success is his construction of a synthesis of Greek *paideia* and Christian truth. Basil's beliefs about the nature of God—and the sort of speech that most appropriately describes him—make up a large part of this synthesis.

CHAPTER 2

Greek Words and Trinitarian Truth

ON THE THRESHOLD OF "ORTHODOXY"

When Basil came to explain his thoughts on the Trinity and to refute certain errors in theological thinking, he brought to this task what he had discovered to be true, good, and useful in Greek *paideia.* He brought certain metaphysical assumptions, philosophical distinctions, technical language, and ways of arguing. This Greek inheritance was not left unaffected or unchanged when Basil pressed it to help in articulating the Christian mysteries. Some points he left behind; others had to be modified.

Basil built his synthesis of Greek and Christian thought over time and in the historical context of the particular situations in which he found himself. Basil's contemporaries, both those amicable and those hostile to him, urged him on in his theological development. Often times Basil forged the meanings of his Trinitarian words in doctrinal debate, both with the more hostile Eunomians and the friendlier, but equally frustrating (to Basil) Old-Nicene Paulinians, a group of conservatives who clung firmly to Nicaea but who resisted the efforts of

other Nicene theologians to grapple more adequately with the threeness of God. Thus, the meanings of these Trinitarian words must be considered in their historical context, for this context has helped to shape the meanings that Basil gave them.

Basil's synthesis emerged not only over time but also in distinct stages that progressed toward ever-greater clarity and—if we judge him from a later vantage point—orthodoxy.[1] In the twenty years (ca. 359–79) during which Basil thought seriously about the Trinity, four distinct stages of linguistic development took shape: (1) the homoiousian years, ca. 360–65; (2) the movement from *homoiousios* to *homoousios,* ca. 365–72; (3) the use of *prosôpa* for what is three in God, ca. 372; and (4) the emergence of *hypostasis,* ca. 375–79, for the same purpose of expressing that which is three in God. Scholars have recognized development in Basil's Trinitarian thought, especially his change from *homoiousios* to *homoousios* and the evolution of *prosôpon* and *hypostasis.*[2]

In spite of these stages of development, there is a certain coherence to Basil's Trinitarian thought; the historical approach to Basil's thought does not sacrifice synthetic coherence to chronological progression. Still, Basil's thought lacks the sort of consistency that characterizes the theology of his younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa.

Michel René Barnes and Lewis Ayres have convincingly shown that Gregory of Nyssa's ontological understanding of nature, power, and activity is the systematic center of his Trinitarian theology.[3] For this insight, Gregory both borrows from and surpasses the work of the other Cappadocians.[4] Thus, Gregory's theology is unique; he uses

1. If Michel Barnes is right that the Council of Nicaea became "orthodoxy" only in 381 (as noted in the introduction), then, of course, we can speak of Basil "progressing toward orthodoxy" only by viewing him from this later (and therefore anachronistic) standard. Viewed in his own time, Basil is helping to "make" orthodoxy rather than conforming to it.

2. See, for example, Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité,* 188–99 and Drecoll. Drecoll's subtitle reveals how he sees this development: *Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner.* Lucian Turcescu has traced Basil's use of *prosôpon* and *hypostasis* in *Against Eunomius* and the epistles; see Turcescu, *"Prosôpon* and *Hypostasis,"* 374–95.

3. See, for example, Barnes, *The Power of God;* "Eunomius of Cyzicus," 59–87; and "The Background of Eunomius' Language," 217–36; and Ayres, "On Not Three People," 445–74.

4. See Ayres, "On Not Three People," 466, who himself here draws upon Karl Holl; see Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium.*

a certain "grammar of divinity," as Ayres calls it, and the heart of this grammar is found in Gregory's theology of divine power.[5] Herein lies Gregory's contribution to pro-Nicene theology.

The recognition of this center of Gregory's theology implies that all other aspects of this theology must be understood in the light of this center. Thus, Ayres rightly concludes that an account of Nyssa's theology must go beyond reporting the distinctions that he makes among words, especially *ousia* and *hypostasis*.[6] Expanding upon Ayres' analogy with language, one may call such terms a "vocabulary of divinity." And one of his main points, at least in regard to Gregory of Nyssa, is that the "vocabulary of divinity" cannot be properly understood except in the context of the "grammar of divinity." In other words, one cannot determine what *ousia* and *hypostasis* (or any other words for that matter) mean when they are predicated of God unless one knows the rules (the "grammar") for talking about divinity in the first place.

The character of Gregory of Nyssa's theology contrasts with that of his older brother, Basil. Nonetheless, Basil's understanding of particular Trinitarian words has a place in the context of the coherence of his Trinitarian thought as a whole; his theological vision both illuminates, and is illuminated by, the words he uses to express this vision. But Basil differs from his younger brother. Gregory's uniqueness as a theologian lies in the systematic character that he gave to what he borrowed from the work of Basil and others; Basil's thought lacks that which makes Gregory's unique. Nonetheless, Basil's Trinitarian theology is not reducible to a series of inconsistent and unrelated statements about God that have no place in a larger theological vision; rather, Basil's vision is less clearly conceived and articulated, less com-

5. See Ayres, "On Not Three People," 466–67. Ayres also uses this language ("grammar") to describe Augustine's Trinitarian thought. There he cites George Lindbeck's use of the term in his *The Nature of Doctrine.* "I use the term," writes Ayres, "in a situation directly analogous to Lindbeck's distinction between a grammatical view of theological language and a propositional or experiental/expressivist view" (Ayres, "The Fundamental Grammar," 72, n. 9). One wonders whether a "propositional view," if held together with the doctrine of analogy, would not also take to itself the virtues of the "grammatical view."

6. Ayres, "On Not Three People," 445–46.

prehensive and less extensive than Gregory's. Basil began to shape his vision and his own grammar and vocabulary of divinity around 359.

The Apollinarian Correspondence

The first stage in the development of Basil's Trinitarian theology is marked by the fact that to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son he uses *homoios kat' ousian* ("like according to substance") and related expressions rather than *homoousios,* which, while it succeeded in offending Arius at the Council of Nicaea, offended many others, too.

Ousia and words or phrases derived from it loomed large in the development of Trinitarian vocabulary. Basil first seriously considered the theological meaning of *ousia* and its compounds against the background of the events of 359.

The Historical Context of the Correspondence

In the fall of 359, the emperor Constantius, who unlike his father, Constantine, sympathized with the "Arians," had called two councils in an attempt to bring unity to a then-factious Church. The Council of Seleucia was the Eastern counterpart to the Western Council of Rimini in Italy,[7] and representatives from each were to meet before the emperor in Constantinople to settle on theological formulae that would end doctrinal division within the Church.[8] At Rimini the polemic was taken up by the Homoousians (including Hilary of Poitiers and Phoebadius of Agen) and the Western Homoians (among them Valens, Ursacius, Germinius, Gaius, and Demophilus).[9]

The Council of Seleucia did not open auspiciously. The bishops

7. Seleucia was a town in the Roman province of Cilicia on the southern coast of Asia Minor about one hundred miles from the Syrian coast; Rimini is on the Adriatic coast of Italy, about one hundred fifty miles northeast of Rome. On the councils of Seleucia and Rimini, see Kopecek, *A History,* 199–215, and Hanson, *The Search,* 371–80.

8. Kopecek, *A History,* 214.

9. Hanson, *The Search,* 376. For an account of the Council of Rimini, see Williams, *Ambrose of Milan,* 22–37.

sharply disagreed over how the council ought to proceed: should they first consider disciplinary matters or matters of faith?[10] Thus, two factions formed: a small one led by Acacius of Caesarea, George of Alexandria, Uranius of Tyre, and Eudoxius of Antioch; and a large one led by the Homoiousians George of Laodicea, Sophronius of Pompeiopolis, and Eleusius of Cyzicus.[11] The large Homoiousian faction debated the demerits of the word *homoousios,* though otherwise they accepted Nicaea. Late on this first day, an exasperated Silvanus of Tarsus proposed that they subscribe to the Creed of Antioch.[12] At this point, the early Church historian Socrates Scholasticus tells us, the Acacians privately withdrew from the council while the remaining bishops heard the Dedication Creed of Antioch. And so the first day ended.

On the second day, the party of George of Laodicea closed themselves in the church and signed the Dedication Creed. Acacius protested the secret transaction and objected to its validity. He then proposed his own statement of faith, and the remaining days of the council were spent discussing it. Socrates provides us with Acacius' statement:[13] Acacius prefers the faith of the Council of Antioch, but he argues for a new formulation of the creed on account of the controversy over *homoousios* and *homoiousios.* While Acacius here prohibits the unscriptural word that the Homoiousians favor, he attempts to conciliate them by anathematizing those who assert the *unlikeness* of the Father and the Son and by formulating his own creed after the Dedication Creed. Acacius wanted the Homoiousians to use *homoios* ("like") instead of *homoiousios,* and the scriptural, "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), instead of the unscriptural "exact image of the Father's essence."[14] This compromise served the homoian Acacians because banning technical

10. Socrates, *H. E.* 2, 39; Sozomen, *H. E.* 4, 22. Theodoret reports that Acacius refused altogether to participate in the council because of the presence of Cyril of Jerusalem who had been earlier deposed; see Theodoret, *H. E.* 2, 22.

11. See Socrates, *H. E.* 2, 39.

12. See ibid. This is the Dedication Creed of Antioch as is implied in Sozomen's description of Acacius' confession of faith; see Sozomen, *H. E.* 4, 22.

13. Socrates, *H. E.* 2, 40. Athanasius also gives a portion of the statement in *De Syn.* 29.

14. See Kopecek, *A History,* 208.

words and retreating to the Scriptures created theological ambiguity. Any fourth-century theologian could profess the Son to be "like the Father": Arius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius, Apollinaris, Eustathius of Sebaste, and Basil of Caesarea could all make the profession, but they would mean very different teachings by it.

Acacius' compromise served even the Eunomians. His prohibition of *anhomoios* did not in reality condemn their theology, and Acacius was sympathetic with them. In fact, Aëtius' *Syntagmation,* written late in the fall of 359, presented neo-Arian theology without using the prohibited term; in its stead, Aëtius used "incomparability in essence *(to en ousia asunkriton)*."[15] Thomas Kopecek, citing Hilary of Poitiers, explains how the Eunomians—who thought that the Son is unlike the Father in essence—could nonetheless profess that the Son is like the Father. "The Son," writes Kopecek, "is unlike God but like the Father because the Father willed to create a creature who would will the same things as he. Therefore, the Son is like the Father because he is a son of his will (voluntatis) rather than of his divinity (divinitatis), 'for he is unlike God because he is neither God nor from God, that is, born from the Father's essence.'"[16] For the Eunomians, then, the Son is both like and unlike the Father, but in different respects.

The Homoiousians saw through Acacius' compromise and rejected it. Some were weary of making new creeds; others pressed Acacius on the meaning of "like the father."[17] They realized that should Acacius' proposal succeed, its ambiguous language protected impious and erroneous views of God under the cloak of orthodoxy. Thus the Council of Seleucia, like its counterpart in Rimini, ended in utter failure. The bishops discussed the likeness of the Son, Socrates writes, "to a most tedious extent, with much acrimonious feeling and subtlety of argument, but without any approach to unity of judgment."[18] The contro-

15. See ibid., 210. Though he banned the compounds of *ousia,* Acacius did not ban *ousia* itself.

16. Ibid., 209–10.

17. Sophronius and Eleusius; see Socrates, *H. E.* 2, 40; Sozomen, *H. E.* 4, 22.

18. Socrates, *H. E.* 2, 40; NPNF 2, 2:70.

versy, however, did not end with the failure of the council, for delegates from each party would battle again in Constantinople.

This gathering in Constantinople, though, was not limited to the delegates from Seleucia and Rimini. Basil of Caesarea, having recently returned from school in Athens, accompanied Eustathius of Sebaste and Basil of Ancyra in their cause against the Eunomians at Constantinople in 359. Basil was supposed to have debated the accomplished orator Aëtius of Antioch, but Basil was not up to the challenge and fled the council for Annesi. Gregory of Nyssa acknowledged his brother's silence and defended him by claiming that Eunomius was guilty of the same offense. Gregory commands: "Now let this man who upbraids that hero with his cowardice tell us whether *he* went down into the thick of the fray, whether *he* uttered one syllable in defence of his own orthodoxy, whether *he* made any vigorous peroration, whether *he* victoriously grappled with the foe."[19] This, of course, hardly exculpates Basil. Regardless, Basil's experience in Constantinople provided the context for his correspondence with Apollinaris of Laodicea, the first record of Basil's thoughts on *ousia* and its compounds.[20] The events of 359–60 provoked Basil to seek the advice of Apollinaris.

Apollinaris of Laodicea was born around the first decade of the fourth century and lived until 392.[21] Of course, he is best known for the heresy that takes his name, but there is much more to him than his denial of a human mind in Christ. Apollinaris was a faithful defender

19. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1, 9; NPNF 2, 5:44. Eunomius may, in fact, be correct in saying that Basil ran home after fleeing from the council, for we know that he retired to Annesi in 360. Furthermore, there is no record of his attendance at the January 360 Council of Constantinople (see Kopecek, *A History,* 305). Dianius' signing of the Creed of Constantinople is often cited as the reason for Basil's retirement to Annesi between 360 and 362; Basil was, indeed, offended by Dianius' action (see Ep. 51), and it may have caused him to stay in Annesi once there, but it was not the reason why he initially returned home. Dianius could not have signed the creed of 360 until Basil had already fled the 359 Council of Constantinople.

20. On the authenticity of the correspondence with Apollinaris, see Prestige, *St. Basil the Great* and de Riedmatten, "La Correspondance," 7 (1956) 199–210; 8 (1957) 53–70.

21. For more on Apollinaris, see Prestige, "Apollinaris: Or, Divine Irruption," in *Fathers and Heretics,* 94–119; Mühlenberg, *Apollinaris von Laodicea;* Raven, *Apollinarianism; Apollinaris von Laodicea,* ed. Lietzman; and Spoerl, "A Study."

of the Nicene Creed and a prolific writer and exegete, though very little of his writing has survived. Apollinaris alienated himself from the rest of the Church and spawned a schismatic sect when he ordained Vitalis bishop of Antioch, a see that already had two orthodox bishops, Paulinus and Meletius.

Basil's checkered relationship with Apollinaris has been treated above. Suffice it to say here that the relationship was complex. Basil clearly respected Apollinaris to the point of asking his opinion on the most important of theological matters. He also admired Apollinaris' vast scholarly output. Nevertheless, Basil's respect for Apollinaris was not strong enough to prevent his turning on him. Basil distanced himself from Apollinaris and unjustly associated Apollinaris' theology with Sabellianism in order to protect himself from being slandered for the same error.

The Correspondence Itself

In his correspondence with Apollinaris, Basil reveals himself to be a homoiousian theologian; he discloses his preference for *homoios aparallaktôs* (exactly like) and his reservations about *homoousios.*

The council, called by Acacius of Caesarea in Constantinople in 360 after Basil had fled the one of 359, nullified all previous formulae and banned the term *ousia* in theological discourse.[22] This prompted Basil to write to Apollinaris.[23] In this letter, Basil asks Apollinaris to

22. Kopecek summarizes the other actions of this council: "It was called by Acacius of Caesarea (1) to ratify Homoianism in the form of a revised version of the Dated Creed (signed on New Year's Eve, 359 by the delegates from both Rimini and Seleucia), (2) to depose Aetius, and (3) to depose all of the homoiousian delegates from Seleucia" (Kopecek, *A History,* 304). According to Philostorgius, Constantius banished Aëtius for maintaining that the Son is like the Father without any difference *(aparallaktôs);* see Philostorgius, *H. E.* 4, 12, and Kopecek, *A History,* 349–51. Theodoret, however, held a different reason for Aëtius' exile. Aëtius claimed that the Son is "invariably" like the Father, but he means by "Father" not "God" but "the will of God"; the Son remains unlike God in essence, and this position, according to Theodoret, led to Aëtius' exile; see Theodoret, *H. E.* 2, 23, and Kopecek, *A History,* 348–49.

23. Prestige dates Ep. 361 to Apollinaris earlier, to the fall of 359, written by Basil from the Council of Seleucia. According to Prestige, Basil wrote asking about the theological terms under discussion at the council (Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 7). De Riedmatten,

explain to him the meaning of *homoousios.* In the very asking, though, Basil reveals how he understands the word. Basil writes to Apollinaris: "Please give us a full discussion of the actual *homoousion*. . . . What meaning does it bear? In what healthy sense can it be applied to objects as to which one can conceive no common genus transcending [*genos koinon huperkeimenon*] them, no material substratum preexisting [*hylikon hypokeimenon proüparchon*] them, and no partition of the original to make the second? Pray distinguish for us fully in what sense we ought to call the Son 'of one substance with' [*homoousios*] the Father without falling into any of the above notions."[24] Basil recognizes that *homoousios* admits of a variety of meanings. Moreover, he rejects two of these meanings as inappropriate when applied to the relationship between the Father and the Son. *Homoousios* cannot properly be predicated of the Father and the Son if it means either a genus or matter.

Notably, in this letter Basil uses only *ousia* to name the common divinity between the Father and the Son (*physis,* "nature," for example, never occurs), but his evaluation of the derivatives of *ousia* is more interesting. He does not question the appropriateness of *ousia* but assumes that the word is able accurately to describe God. He does, however, openly discuss the usefulness of *homoousios* and *homoios apar-*

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however, dates Ep. 361 to after Constantinople 360, between 360 and 362. As de Riedmatten writes, "L'allusion au départ de Grégroire de Nazianze, retourné auprès de ses parents, suggère que la lettre été écrite du Pont, entre 360 et 362" (de Riedmatten, "La Correspondance," 59). Kopecek rightly sides with de Riedmatten "for Ep. 361 was, in part, concerned with the rejection of the term essence *(ousia)*. Now it is true that the Acacian compromise formula of Seleucia, 359 did reject homoousion and homoiousion (as well as anomoion = unlikeness), but it said nothing about *ousia* itself. This would seem to substantiate a date after Constantinople, 360, which specifically rejected *ousia*" (Kopecek, *A History,* 362–63, n. 2). Though de Riedmatten and Kopecek have the stronger argument, neither directly addresses Prestige's arguments for the earlier date. According to Prestige, that Apollinaris lived in Laodicea is significant. In the opening of his letter, Basil says that Apollinaris is the only one whom he could call upon among those who are "precise both in understanding and in utterance (cf. 1 Cor 1:5), and at the same time accessible" (Ep. 361 [Courtonne, 3:221, 7–8]; trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 38). "Laodicea," says Prestige, "was about a hundred and twenty miles from Seleucia by sea in a straight line, on a coast that was thick with shipping; communication was much quicker from Laodicea than from Pontus" (Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 7). So Prestige sees Basil's calling Apollinaris "accessible" as a reference to his location in Laodicea in relation to Seleucia.

24. Ep. 361 (Courtonne, 3:221, 15–24); trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 38–39.

allaktôs. Although Basil asks Apollinaris for his opinion about the proper use of *homoousios,* he "opens his heart" to Apollinaris and reveals his own preliminary judgment of the word: he does not believe it the best word to express the relationship between the Father and the Son. This relationship, according to Basil, is such that "whatever one takes the substance [*ousia*] of the Father to be in basic reality, one is entirely bound to take the substance [*ousia*] of the Son to be that too."[25] The result, writes Basil, is that "if we call the substance of the Father immaterial [*noêtos*], eternal, unbegotten light, we shall describe the substance of the Only-begotten as immaterial, eternal, begotten light."[26] Basil thinks that "like without a difference *(aparallaktôs homoios)*" expresses this relationship better than *homoousios.*[27] The reason that he gives for preferring "like without a difference" discloses the fact that, for Basil at this point in time, *homoousios* is properly predicated of things that are not truly distinct. "I think it could be correctly said," he writes, "not that light is identical [*tauton*] with light, even though there is no difference in greatness or weakness, for each is in its own termination of being [*perigraphê ousias*]; but rather that light is similar [*homoios*] to light albeit unalterably, exactly, and according to being [*homoion de kat' ousian akribôs aparallaktôs*]."[28]

Apollinaris' response to Basil is preserved as Basil's Ep. 362. Prestige describes this letter well: "It sets out a powerful theological argument, thoroughly in keeping with the known views, terse style, and pregnant argument of Apollinaris. The treatment is based on the doctrine of Identity of Substance in the Godhead."[29] What exactly Basil thought of Apollinaris' arguments is impossible to say, for Basil did not respond in turn to Apollinaris' correspondence.[30] However, two points may be made.

25. Ibid. (Courtonne, 3:221, 25–27); trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 39.

26. Ibid. (Courtonne, 3:221, 27–29); trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 39.

27. Ibid. (Courtonne, 3:221, 29–31); trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 39.

28. Ibid. (Courtonne, 3:221, 31–35); my translation; cf. Deferrari, 4:335 and Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 39.

29. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 9. On Ep. 362 and 364, see also Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 25–28.

30. Ep. 363 to Apollinaris is not a reply to Ep. 362 (Apollinaris to Basil), but a request,

First, Basil and Apollinaris agree on two ways in which *homoousios* cannot be properly applied to the Father and the Son. Like Basil, Apollinaris rejects the notion that the Father and the Son have in common either an overlying genus or an underlying material, but his reasons for rejecting these two views result from a more refined theological understanding of the Trinity than Basil had at the time. Apollinaris uses *homoousios* in a sense in which Basil does not: the originating source of something (Apollinaris uses the examples of Adam and David) and the "stock" or "race" that derives from this source are "the same in substance" [*tauton kata tên ousian*]. So, then, the Son is God because he *is* the Father, just as "all we men are Adam and are one man [and] David's son is David, as being the same [*tauton*] as he is"; "and as you [Basil] rightly say, the Son is in substance exactly what the Father is. In no other sense could the Son be God, since the Father is acknowledged as the one and only God."[31] Given this understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son, Apollinaris can say that "in this way we shall avoid attributing the idea of a single transcending genus [*genos*] or a single underlying material to the Father and the Son, when we compare the originative self [*genarchikê idiotês*] of the ultimate source, and the stocks [*genos*] derived from such originals [*genarchês*], to the Offspring only-begotten out of the one Source."[32]

By way of contrast, however—and this is the second point—Basil discloses an aversion to using *tauton* ("identical") of the Father and the Son, but Apollinaris' arguments center around the *tautotês* ("identity") of the Father and the Son. Basil's use of *tauton* calls to mind the earlier interpretation of the word by Basil of Ancyra and the other Homoiousians at the Synod of Ancyra. For them, *homoousion* was a synonym for *tautoousion,* and they rejected both not only because of the corporeal

perhaps before Ep. 361, to resume the correspondence. Kopecek, following R. Weijenborg ("De authenticitate et sensa quarundarum," 384–87) dates Ep. 363 to 355 "while Basil was still in Athens" (Kopecek, *A History,* 362, n. 2); see Drecoll's reconstruction of the correspondence (Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 22).

31. Apollinaris, Ep. 362 (Courtonne, 3:222, 8–12); trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 40.

32. Ibid. (Courtonne, 3:222, 14–223, 19); trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 40.

connotations of the words, but also because they made the Father and Son identical.[33]

Against Eunomius

Thus begins Basil's synthesis of Greek and Christian thought: he sifts through Greek words in his struggle to express most appropriately the relationship between the Father and the Son. At about the same time that Basil writes Apollinaris, he crafts a theological vision that is informed by Greek metaphysics as well as by the Bible in his work, *Against Eunomius.* Basil conceives, as it were, the rules that govern language about God (his "grammar of divinity") and the words that best describe him (his "vocabulary of divinity").

Eunomius was not, above all, a "logic chopper" and a rationalist but, rather, developed his theology from a "particular way of 'seeing' Jesus Christ" and the apostolic hierarchy of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[34] This vision of Christ insists that what is said of him be said of him univocally.[35] That is, one cannot divide Christ and so maintain

33. See the nineteenth anathema of the Creed of Ancyra: "And if anyone . . . says that the Son is *homoousios* or *tautoousios* with the Father, cursed be him" (Hahn, ed., *Bibliothek der Symbole,* p. 204). See also Hanson, *The Search,* 348–57, especially 356. Basil does become better disposed to the use of *tauton* and *tautotês,* apparently due to the influence of Apollinaris. A sentence in *Against Eunomius* calls to mind a passage from Apollinaris' letter to Basil (printed as Basil Ep. 362) where Apollinaris writes that the Father and Son are the "same thing in otherness, and different in sameness [*tauton en heterotêti, kai heteron en tautotêti*]" (Ep. 362 [Courtonne, 3:222, 33–34]; trans. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 41). See *Con. Eun.* 2, 28 (SC 305:120, 43–47). Deferrari's translation of Apollinaris' text is smoother but does not make this difficult phrase more understandable: "the same in difference, and different in sameness" (Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 4:339). The case for Basil's dependence may be strengthened by the interesting fact that this instance of *heterotês* is the only one in *Against Eunomius.* Though Basil may here depend upon Apollinaris and though Basil becomes better disposed to the use of *tautotês* to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son, the significance of Basil's change in disposition should not be exaggerated. He uses *tautotês* only five times in the whole of *Against Eunomius,* and only three of these instances reflect Basil's change in mind about the term. On Basil's dependence upon Apollinaris, see Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 25–26, and the end of this chapter.

34. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 121. Vaggione spends a great deal of time outlining the "imaginative hearts" that stand behind the more abstract theological arguments of the fourth century.

35. John Behr's *The Nicene Faith* very successfully employs the distinction between

that some things are said of him in one nature, others, in another nature. The dispute over the meaning of Proverbs 8:22 serves as the best example of these different approaches to the Scriptures. If the Scriptures call the Word a "creature," then he must be so. To apply this text to the Word's body but not to him is to render asunder what must remain united for our salvation. When, in this way, there are made two subjects in Christ, the incarnation itself is undermined. "If, as non-Nicenes claimed, it was truly crucial that there be one and only one Christ, and that the Logos be a single subject throughout, then that unity had to extend to his *entire* history and not merely to its earthly portion."[36]

Eunomius developed his ontology (forced by his opponents to the obnoxious conclusion of claiming to know God as well as he knows himself) to safeguard both the apostolic hierarchy of Father, Son, and Spirit and his view of the incarnate Christ: the proper *taxis* among Father, Son, and Spirit must be acknowledged as well as the distinctive existence of Christ. Eunomius secured the proper understanding of the divine hierarchy by his application of the word "unbegotten" to God. God's very essence is unbegottenness, which means of course that the begotten, the Son, cannot share this essence.

Eunomius' theory of language and his understanding of divine causality reinforced this conclusion that the Son cannot share God's essence.[37] Words used both of God and of human beings (such as "father") are really homonyms. Father, applied to God, means not that the Father has a Son, but that he does not owe his existence to another. Words like "good," "light," and "life" would be equivocally predicated of Father and Son. That words are applied equivocally to Father and Son, and to human beings and God, does not mean for Eunomius that those words fail to communicate. Most people would associate equivocal predication with theologians who stress the transcendence

"univocal" and "partitive" exegesis as a way of understanding the two basic traditions of fourth-century theology.

36. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 127.

37. See Behr, *The Nicene Faith,* 277–80, and Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 252–58.

and unknowability of God: God is so far above us that when we use our words of him they do not mean what they mean when predicated of us, and we cannot know what they mean when predicated of God. With Eunomius, it was not so. In fact, what so startled his opponents and startles us, too, is his claim to know God as God knows himself:[38] God's definition is unbegottenness, and, according to Eunomius, this definition is accessible to us. Richard Vaggione explains well what Eunomius means by this claim. To know God's name "is to gain 'real' access to an intelligible reality that really exists independently of ourselves."[39] On the other hand, to know God piecemeal (according to ideas or *epinoiai*) is not really to know him at all, for in fact God is not fragmented. True knowledge of God, for Eunomius, cannot be discursive; it must be immediate—as it is for God himself—in order to be real.

Since only the Unbegotten is eternal, he does not eternally produce anything. If he did, then there would be an eternal product, and hence two unbegottens. As Michel Barnes puts it: "For Eunomius the transcendence of God requires that He cannot be understood to generate a product which has the same kind of existence He has, since that kind of existence is to be uncaused or unproduced, and any product will necessarily (i.e., by definition) be caused. The uniqueness of God's kind of existence means that any productivity must exist outside His nature."[40] God's activity, then, is not eternal and neither are its effects. The Son of God is not an eternal "product" of the essence of God, for God is not essentially productive.[41] Rather, the Son is the unique product of the will of God, the first creature through whom come the rest of creation.

Eunomius articulated this theology in 359 at the council that met in Constantinople where he delivered his *Apology,* which he published

38. Eunomius, fragment 2, 3–6.

39. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 254.

40. Barnes, "Eunomius of Cyzicus," 62.

41. Eunomius cannot speak of God having an essential *dynamis;* he has only a "moral" or "willful" *dynamis;* see Barnes, "Eunomius of Cyzicus," 63–67.

around 360.[42] In the early 360s Basil wrote a response, his *Against Eunomius,*[43] which comes down to us in five books, the last two of which, however, are spurious.[44] Basil begins the treatise by asserting that Eunomius is a vainglorious liar who tries to conceal his odious doctrines under the cover of an ancient confession of faith. After this attack on Eunomius' person and character (*Contra Eunomium* 1, 1–5), Basil takes up the real work at hand, refuting Eunomius' *Apology.*

In broad outline, Basil's three books are structured around the refutation of certain key ideas in the thought of Eunomius. First, Basil argues against Eunomius' assertion that unbegottenness is the substance of God (*Contra Eunomium* 1, 5–16). Here Basil explains how human language can and cannot be used of God.

After he shows that God's substance cannot be unbegottenness, Basil makes his second major point: the Unbegotten can beget and his Son is not foreign to him. But, if the Son is not foreign to the essence of the Father, Basil must now explain their communion (*Contra Eunomium* 1, 16–27). Here Basil explains the ideas of order, time, and age in relation to the Godhead, and closes Book One by affirming that divine simplicity does not imply the inequality of the Father and the Son. Basil begins Book Two by taking up the same general topic but focuses on the ontological status of the Son (*Contra Eunomium* 2, 1–21).

Basil revisits the relationship between the things of God and the things of humanity in the fourth part of his treatise. This time, however, his focus is on the nature of the Son's generation, the laws that govern God's names, and God's freedom from the laws of the world that he created (*Contra Eunomium* 2, 22–31). Basil closes Book Two by restating that the Son is not the creature of the Father, and anticipates Book Three with an affirmation that the Spirit is not the creation of the Son (*Contra Eunomium* 2, 32–34).

Book Three is the shortest and least theological of the books in

42. For more on the theology of Eunomius, see Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la trinité,* 19–53, and Wiles, "Eunomius: Dialectician or Defender?" 157–72.

43. On the date of this work, see Appendix 2.

44. See Sesboüé, "Introduction," 61–64, and Hayes, *The Greek Manuscript Tradition.*

Against Eunomius. Aside from Basil's distinction between order and dignity, on the one hand, and nature, on the other (*Contra Eunomium* 3, 1–2), it is a string of biblical texts showing the divinity of the Holy Spirit (*Contra Eunomium* 3, 2–7). Basil ends this work very abruptly; he offers no conclusion or summarizing synthesis of the work.

On the one hand, from the point of view of his use of *homoousios, Against Eunomius* represents Basil's immature theology. The fact that in *Against Eunomius* Basil uses *homoousios* only once in a theological sense indicates at the very least that *homoousios* has not achieved the status of a "watchword" and at most that Basil is still uncomfortable with the term. Furthermore, Basil almost exclusively uses *homoios* and its cognates to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son. Thus, *Against Eunomius* is firmly grounded in the first stage, the homoiousian stage, of Basil's Trinitarian theology because he is still thinking in homoiousian terms.

On the other hand, Basil offers in *Against Eunomius* the beginnings of a mature theological vision; this is the real achievement of the work, for the theological framework here constructed will remain the basis of his Trinitarian thought even as it develops through the years. Moreover, the best point of entry into Basil's theological system is his understanding of the *ousia,* the being or substance, of God.

Ousia and Basil's Theology of the One God

Although in *Against Eunomius* Basil uses a wide range of words for what is one in God *(ousia, theotês,* and *physis),* he clearly prefers, and most commonly uses, *ousia* and the articular infinitive from the same verb, *to einai.* The meaning of *ousia* reveals how Basil speaks of the oneness of God.

Basil fashions his understanding of *ousia* from the philosophical sources of his own tradition and in reaction to Eunomius' claims of radical subordinationism. One must exercise caution, though, in attributing philosophical influence to the Christian understanding of the Trinity and be wary about the attempts to trace Basil's use of a word back to earlier philosophical sources. As Adolf Martin Rit-

ter writes, "According to the Cappadocians, divine *ousia* is not simply identical with one of the given concepts of *ousia* whether Platonic, Stoic, or Aristotelian."[45] In general and in specific instances, the Cappadocians' indebtedness to Greek philosophy is undeniable.[46] It would be a mistake, however, to deny them a certain creativity in their borrowing. Basil did not use the pagan philosophers with a view toward accurately preserving the integrity of their thought. On the contrary, he adapts, alters, and adjusts what he borrows making it suitable to explain, as far as possible, the Christian mysteries. Concerning Basil in particular, Reinhard Hübner points out that "a desire for speculation does not drive his Trinitarian theology."[47] Basil, to be sure, applies philosophical words and concepts to the Godhead, but he is not in the business, thereby, of constructing a philosophical system of metaphysics or ontology.[48]

Basil forms his conception of *ousia* by both borrowing from, and rejecting, the philosophical sources at his disposal. The search for Basil's sources, however, does not pronounce the final word on his understanding of *ousia,* for he does not appropriate any particular metaphysical system in toto.

In *Against Eunomius* Basil never defines *ousia* as it applies to God—nor *physis* or *theotês,* for that matter—for in a very real sense it does not admit of definition. The *ousia* and *physis* of God may be described but not defined.[49] *Ousia,* then, is not a cipher. God's transcendence

45. Ritter, "Die Trinitätstheologie," 202.

46. Sesboüé summarizes well Basil's dependence upon Greek philosophy: "Ce bilan provisoire des principales influences philosophiques qui s'exercent dans le *Contre Eunome* donne un exemple typique de ce que l'on pourrait appeler la *koiné* philosophique à laquelle se rattachent les Pères de l'Église formés dans les grandes écoles de leur temps. Chez Basile ce syncrétisme—ou cet éclectisme—a son originalité: le système de catégories est à dominante stoïcienne avec de nombreuses interférences aristotéliciennes. Mais le mouvement de la pensée toujours en recherche du mystère insondable de Dieu a une note discrètement platonicienne" (Sesboüé, "Introduction," 1:195).

47. Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 483.

48. Hübner may have overstated the case, though, when he wrote, "indeed one can do him no greater injustice than to misunderstand metaphysically his theological formulae" (ibid.).

49. Basil repeatedly states that God's *ousia* is beyond comprehension but writes the same of his nature: "From the word *agennêtos* this comes to us: we learn the *how* of God

makes his essence unreachable by the human mind, but God is not so far above it that it can know nothing whatsoever about him; human speech does not altogether fail before the mystery of God. Basil, then, describes God's *ousia,* and he leaves many clues that reveal vestiges of Stoic thought in his conception of *ousia.*[50]

One such clue to the influence of Stoic thought on Basil's conception of *ousia* is his definition of human *ousia:* "By *ousia* I mean the 'material substrate' [*hylikon hypokeimenon*]."[51] This definition of human *ousia* does not apply to the divine *ousia,* for of course Basil denies that God is material in any way. But just as Stoic thought influenced Basil's definition of human *ousia,* it has influenced his description of divine *ousia.* This has been shown most clearly by Reinhard Hübner. Hübner has tried to prove that Basil's Ep. 38 is spurious and, in truth, written by Gregory of Nyssa.[52] Hübner persuasively argues that "the letter cannot come from Basil because the concept of *ousia* defined there wholly differs from the one Basil holds" in writings whose authenticity is not questioned.[53] Ep. 38's notion of *ousia* is more Aristotelian, Basil's, more Stoic.

In the course of proving his thesis, Hübner elucidates some interesting passages in *Against Eunomius* and *On the Holy Spirit* in which Basil writes of *ousia.* Basil wrote *On the Holy Spirit* some fifteen years later than *Against Eunomius,* and it contains a text crucial for discerning Basil's philosophical sources.

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rather than his nature itself" (*Con. Eun.* 1, 15 [SC 299:226, 36–37]). The *what* of God, his *ousia* and *physis,* remains beyond the cognitive abilities of rational creatures.

50. For the influence of Stoicism on Basil's *Against Eunomius* in general, see Sesboüé, "Introduction," 1:76–83. Basil also knows and uses some Aristotelian philosophy but not so much on this metaphysical level. Examples of Aristotelian influence include the following: Basil's distinction between "how something is" and "what it is" (see *Con. Eun.* 1, 15 and Sesboüé, *Contre Eunome,* 1:225, n. 1); and his remarks on contrary properties (see *Con. Eun.* 2, 28 and Sesboüé, *Contre Eunome,* 2:118–19, n. 1). See also Sesboüé, "Introduction," 1:83–89.

51. *Con. Eun.* 2, 4 (SC 305:20, 11).

52. Hübner's analysis has been challenged. See Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea,* 1:182–89, nn. 181–202; Hammerstaedt, "Zur Echtheit von Basiliusbrief 38," 416–19; and Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 297–331. Since the arguments of Hübner's opponents have not (yet) changed scholarly consensus, I will consider Ep. 38 inauthentic.

53. Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 469.

> We can learn from experts in grammar that some nouns are common, used to describe a great number of things, while others are more specific, and the force of others is proper to one person or thing. *Essence* [*ousia*]*,* for example, is a common noun; it can be used to describe all things, whether animate or inanimate. *Living* is more specific; it describes fewer subjects than *essence,* but since it includes both rational and irrational life, there are many more specific nouns: *human* is more specific than *living,* and *man* is more specific than *human,* while the individual names *Peter, James,* and *John* are the most specific of all.[54]

As Hübner points out, *ousia* here cannot mean what Aristotle meant by *ousia deutera,* for according to Aristotle this *ousia* is not a genus including the animate and the inanimate but designates the species, the "Artbegriff" and *eidos,* the genus together with the specific difference.[55] This method of categorization is not Aristotelian but Stoic.[56]

Stoic ontological categories illuminate the distinctions that Basil makes in the text quoted above from *On the Holy Spirit.*[57] Unlike Aristotle's "horizontal" categories, which distinguish in a thing the essential from the accidental, Stoic categories are "vertical"—by them, a particular thing is understood according to degrees of concreteness.[58] None of the categories is accidental; "all must be present in a given reality if that reality is to be grasped in all its individuality."[59] The first of the Stoic categories, called *ousia* or *hypokeimenon* (substrate), measures material existence, the only real existence for the Stoics.[60] Though the

54. *De Spiritu Sancto* 17, 41 (SC 17, 184, 35c-185, 35d); trans. Anderson, 68.

55. See Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 471.

56. For Hübner's arguments on this point, see ibid., 474–79.

57. Any presentation of Stoic thought encounters two difficulties: the limited and fragmentary nature of the sources and the lack of uniformity among the Stoic thinkers themselves. This account of Stoic categories will remain very general and draw upon the guidance of secondary literature. See especially Rist, "Categories and Their Uses," 38–57. This article is identical with the ninth chapter of Rist's previously published *Stoic Philosophy.* See also Colish, *The Stoic Tradition.*

58. See Colish, *The Stoic Tradition,* 55.

59. Ibid.

60. See Rist, "Categories and Their Uses," 40–41, and Colish, *The Stoic Tradition,* 55. Though the Stoics may be called "materialists," they should be distinguished from modern materialists. Stoic materialism has its origin in Zeno's reaction against Platonic and Aristotelian dualism; for him, it is not that spirit does not exist, but that spirit and matter are identical; see Colish, *The Stoic Tradition,* 9.

Stoics are materialists—for only material things truly exist, i.e., have *ousia*—they do make room in their system for certain incorporeals: void, place, time, and *lekta* ("things meant," e.g., giants and centaurs). *Ousia* and *hypokeimenon* are identical with "prime matter." The qualification of this matter—quality, *poion,* is the second of the Stoics' categories—results in the individual thing. In fact, *ousia* and *poion* never exist apart, as "a piece of iron, for example, cannot exist without being hard."[61] Notably, "the categories themselves are examples of one type of *lekton;* they are incomplete *lekta.*"[62] This helps to explain why *ousia* and *poion* cannot exist apart; each incompletely accounts for an aspect of reality, but their union brings about a certain completeness.[63] These Stoic categories are likely operating behind the distinctions that Basil makes in the above text from *On the Holy Spirit. Ousia* "can be used to describe all things" while *living* and *rational* further specify *ousia* until the highest specialization is reached in the particulars—Peter, James, and John—each having qualities that characterize them as individuals.

Other clues corroborate this evidence from *On the Holy Spirit.* First, in *Against Eunomius* Basil uses *hypokeimenon* and *ousia* as synonyms in the course of explaining his understanding of the community of sub-

61. Rist, "Categories and Their Uses," 44. The Stoics further divide this category into general *(koinôs)* and specific *(idiôs)* quality; see Rist, "Categories and Their Uses," 46–51. Hübner—drawing upon Simplicius of Cilicia, the sixth-century commentator on the works of Aristotle—nicely explains this distinction: "*Quality* is divided into *general quality* and *specific quality.* The former brings a generic qualification to unqualified matter, the latter, a particular qualification to already generally qualified matter; this *specific quality* is the lasting, essential qualitative definition of a being whereby it is differentiated from all other beings" (Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 478). With this distinction in quality, the discussion of *hypokeimenon* requires the following nuance. Subject or substrate *(hypokeimenon)* may be understood in two senses: first, unqualified matter *(apoios hylê),* which the Stoics identified with *ousia;* and secondly, generally qualified *(koinôs poion)* or specifically qualified *(idiôs poion)* matter; see ibid.

62. Rist, "Categories and Their Uses," 40.

63. Technically, the description of a particular thing would not be complete without mention of the two remaining categories: "disposition" *(pôs echon),* which "includes times, places, actions, size, and color [and] describes the particular situation and attributes of the individual"; and "relative disposition" *(pros ti pôs echon),* "which denotes the way that an individual thing is related to other phenomena" (Colish, *The Stoic Tradition,* 55–56). Of the categories, only *ousia / hypokeimenon* and *poion* are relevant for this discussion of Basil's philosophical sources.

stance of the Father and the Son.[64] Secondly, Basil explains that the opposing characteristics of the Father and the Son do not destroy the unity of *ousia.* He offers examples wherein there is one *ousia* but different properties: "[Father and Son are] like the winged and the walking, those living in water and those on land, the rational and the irrational. For, because one *ousia* underlies all, these properties do not estrange the *ousia;* it is not as if they persuade themselves to band together in sedition against the *ousia.*"[65] This conception of *ousia* cannot be either Aristotle's *ousia prôtê* or *ousia deutera;* the rational and the irrational cannot be in the same species *(ousia deutera),* and *a fortiori* cannot be one and the same concrete object *(ousia prôtê)*.[66] Only Stoic categories make sense of such distinctions. Finally, Basil calls *homoousios* the potter and the pot and the ship builder and the ship; human beings are above, but also *homoousioi* with, their works.[67] Again, only a Stoic metaphysical framework makes such statements intelligible.[68]

While Stoic philosophy doubtlessly influenced Basil's thought, he did not appropriate the whole system, and, in fact, rejected key parts of it. Most obviously, Basil is not a materialist like the Stoics. As in Ep. 361 to Apollinaris, in *Against Eunomius* Basil rejects the material connotations of *homoousios.*[69] Furthermore, he labors to point out

64. "We accept, however," Basil says, "the following understanding of the community of substance. One and the same explanation of substance [*tou einai*] should be attributed to both the Father and the Son. If, by hypothesis, the Father is considered to be light in substance [*tô hypokeimenô*], then the substance [*ousian*] of the Son too should be confessed to be light. Likewise, should someone render an account of the substance [*tou einai*] of the Father, the same thing would apply also to the Son. If the community of substance is thus understood, we accept this explanation and say that that belief is our own" (*Con. Eun.* 1, 19 [SC 299:240, 32–242, 40]). Notably, this passage also demonstrates *to einai* to be freely interchangeable with *ousia* and *hypokeimenon.* According to Hübner, "this identification of divine *ousia* with *hypokeimenon* can only be understood in analogy with Stoic *proton hypokeimenon*" (Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 481). Indeed, in Stoic thought *ousia* is only a synonym for *prôton hypokeimenon* and not for an already qualified substrate. In this passage from *Against Eunomius* 1, 19, however, Basil specifically predicates "light" of God's *ousia* which is not thus as completely unqualified as is the "first substrate."

65. *Con. Eun.* 2, 28 (SC 305:120, 47–50).

66. See Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 472–73.

67. *Con. Eun.* 2, 19 (SC 305:80, 63–65).

68. See Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 473.

69. See Ep. 361 and *Con. Eun.* 1, 19 (SC 299:240, 27–32). This latter reference does not

that the generation of the Son from the Father must be stripped of any physical elements.[70] Also, for Basil the *ousia* of God transcends the world and is not identical with it; Basil disagrees with the monistic tenets of the Stoics. Hübner states the matter in this way: "as a Christian theologian, for Basil, God and the cosmos are sharply distinguished, and their *ousiai* are fundamentally and irreconcilably different. Basil recognizes *one ousia* of all *created* things—all perceptible bodies have *one ousia*—and *one ousia* of God."[71] Thus Basil forms his conception of divine *ousia* by both borrowing from, and rejecting, Stoic thought. Because Basil does not simply appropriate the whole Stoic metaphysics, this identification of philosophical sources does not very much help to describe his conception of the divine *ousia.* Basil offers a clearer picture of this *ousia* in his teaching on the divine *epinoiai,* divine concepts or titles.

Basil's application of concepts and titles[72] to God manifests a certain theological frame of reference: God is simple and transcendent and unknowable in his simplicity and transcendence. Human knowledge of him, then, is fragmentary, incomplete, and made up of a number of concepts.

Basil reveals much about his understanding of God in the so-called Fourth Refutation of the first book of *Against Eunomius,*[73] in which he treats how concepts are used of God and demonstrates that knowledge of God's *ousia* is impossible for the human mind. Both of these positions—on concepts and on human knowledge of God—are the logical

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mention the word *homoousios,* but Basil here rejects the same idea, viz., the materiality of *ousia,* that he does in Ep. 361.

70. See *Con. Eun.* 2, 22–24.

71. Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 480. Though Basil uses analogies from the created world to explain the divine *ousia* (see *Con. Eun.* 2, 4; 2, 28) the ultimate unknowability of God restricts such analogies to only a limited usefulness.

72. I will usually use the English "concept" to translate *epinoia,* though when more appropriate, I use "title" instead. On Basil's theory of language and knowledge of God, see Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité,* 69–93.

73. *Con. Eun.* 1, 5–16. Sesboüé is responsible for this division of *Against Eunomius* into "réfutations"; it appears to be very sensible and highlights the polemical nature of the work. Book One has seven refutations; Book Two, seven; and Book Three, six.

corollaries of a principle more fundamental to Basil's understanding of God, the principle of the unknowability of *ousia.*[74] It is because of this character of God's *ousia* that it cannot simply be grasped but must be understood—insofar as it can be—by many concepts. God's *ousia* so far transcends the human mind that any human knowledge of it is necessarily fragmentary; one must know God, as it were, bit by bit, concept by concept. This is not to say that God is composed of these various pieces, but rather that human knowledge is. Basil's doctrine of concepts says as much about the frailty of the human mind as it does about the transcendence of God's being. Through this treatment of concepts, applied to God, Basil communicates many of the rules for speaking about God; these rules, or principles, are at the heart of his theological vision.

Basil forms his own thoughts here against Eunomius' understanding of concepts. He cites the following words of Eunomius' *Apology:* "When we say 'Unbegotten,' then, we do not imagine that we ought to honour God only in name, in conformity with human invention; rather, in conformity with reality, we ought to repay him the debt which above all others is most due God: the acknowledgment that he is what he is. Expressions based on invention have their existence in name and utterance only, and by their nature are dissolved along with the sounds [which make them up]."[75] For Eunomius, then, a concept has existence only when it is uttered and has no real referent in God. Concepts, it follows, cannot truly acknowledge God for what he is. Basil disagrees with this understanding of concepts, for he claims that something may be both conceptual *(kat' epinoian) and* true.[76] After attacking Eunomius' position, Basil describes *epinoiai* as the result of reflection upon sense impressions and illustrates his meaning by way of example: wheat is very simple and recognized by all, yet closer examination reveals different aspects of this one thing—wheat may be con-

74. For this formulation of the principle, see Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 65.

75. *Con. Eun.* 1, 5 (SC 299:180, 124–29), citing Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 8, 1–5, in Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 40–43.

76. *Con. Eun.* 1, 7 (SC 299:192, 44–46).

sidered as fruit, seed, or nourishment.[77] Basil says that "each of these sayings is also thought of conceptually, and the concept does not pass away with the noise of the mouth; rather, thoughts are established in the soul of him who conceived them."[78] Thus, rational reflection, bringing out the complexity of something that appears simple to the senses, produces concepts that accurately reflect the characteristics of a thing.[79]

To make the same point, Basil also invokes Jesus' use of titles to refer to himself. He calls himself door, way, bread, vine, shepherd, and light, but he is one in substrate *(hen ôn kata to hypokeimenon)* and one substance *(ousia),* simple and uncomposed *(haplê kai asunthetos)*.[80] Each of these names or concepts accurately conveys different truths about the one Lord. As Basil says: "For not all names mutually refer to the same thing. For that which is indicated by 'light' is one thing, and by 'vine' another, and by 'road' another, and by 'shepherd' another. Although he [the Lord] is one in substrate *(kata hypokeimenon)* and has one simple and uncomposed substance *(ousia),* he names himself differently at different times; he adopts names different from each other in concept *(epinoiais)*. For he takes to himself different names according to his different activities and according to his relationship towards the objects of his kindness."[81] Basil concludes this account of concepts by reducing Eunomius' position to absurdity. He argues that if nothing may be said conceptually *(kat' epinoian)* of God, then everything that is predicated of him is predicated substantially. But then, all the names mean the same thing, and this is absurd. As Basil rhetorically asks, "How, therefore, is it not absurd to say that craftsmanship is his

77. See ibid. 1, 6 (SC 299:186, 44–51).

78. Ibid. 1, 6 (SC 299:186, 51–54).

79. Scot Douglass uses Basil's wheat example to discuss "distanciation," the epistemological distance between human beings and the *ousai* of reality (see Douglass, *Theology of the Gap,* 49–52). Douglass' book focuses on the functions of *diastêma* and *kinesis* especially in the thought of Gregory of Nyssa but as anticipated in Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus.

80. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 7 (SC 299:188, 4–190, 15).

81. Ibid. 1, 7 (SC 299:188, 10–190, 17).

substance *(ousia)?* Or again, that his providence is his substance? Or again, that his prescience is likewise? And, in general how is it not absurd to make every activity substance?"[82]

After considering concepts in general, Basil turns his focus to Eunomius' fixation on one such concept, unbegottenness—though Eunomius would not call it a concept, for in his mind it designates the very substance of God, and concepts, by his definition, have no existence. Basil's position on the meaning of *agennêtos* logically correlates to his more fundamental view that the divine *ousia* is unknowable and inexpressible. *Agennêtos* is like the other concepts and holds no monopoly over other words that accurately, though incompletely, describe God. Thus, Basil's handling of *agennêtos* is consistent with both his basic view of divinity and his understanding of God's other titles.

Having given *agennêtos* such a central role in his understanding of divinity, Eunomius finds himself in the strange position of arguing that it does not designate a privation. Basil cites Eunomius' position: "He [God] is not such [unbegotten], however, by way of privation; for if privatives are privatives with respect to the inherent properties of something, then they are secondary to their positives" and God has never had birth as an inherent property.[83] Basil first identifies Eunomius' position as coming from Aristotle and proceeds to charge him with a loyalty to the wisdom of the world rather than to the teaching of the Spirit.[84] He then moves on to the heart of his argument. *Agennêtos* is like other predicates applied to God (incorruptible, immortal, invisible): if they are privations, then so is *agennêtos;* if they are not, then neither is *agennetos.* Furthermore, *agennêtos,* like the other predicates, can claim no special ability to express God's nature. No one predicate nor multiple and varied predicates as a group captures God's nature, but they are sufficient for human beings.[85] Basil proceeds to distin-

82. Ibid. 1, 8 (SC 299:194, 22–25).

83. Ibid. 1, 9 (SC 299:198, 4–5), citing Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 8, 7–8, in Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 42–43).

84. See ibid. 1, 9 (SC 299:198, 6–200, 16).

85. Ibid. 1, 10 (SC 299:204, 1–5).

guish cataphatic from apophatic predicates of God and to define *agennêtos*—"that the being of God depends on no one cause nor source."[86] This seems sensible enough, but Basil then argues that *agennêtos* cannot be the substance of God because it expresses what is not in God.[87] This argument is weak, for *agennêtos* truly has a referent in the being of God. Surely, it is a negative expression, but one that designates a truly existing characteristic of God, namely that he is eternal.[88] The predicate "immortal," for example, means "not able to die" but designates something quite positive, everlasting life. The same could be said of other privative predicates; though negative expressions, they designate positively existing attributes.

A few chapters later Basil most strongly argues against Eunomius' claim that *agennêtos* expresses the very substance of God. The notion of *agennêtos* comes to us, explains Basil, not by an examination of *what* God is but *how* he is.[89] Basil uses an analogy to make his point: that Adam was not formed by sexual union but by the hand of God is no answer to the question "what is the nature of Adam" or "what is his substance?"[90] Basil completes this stage of his argument by restating his definition of *agennêtos:* to be unbegotten is "not to have the source of existence from the outside."[91]

Basil's understanding of *epinoiai*—and of *agennêtos* as one such *epinoia*—flows logically from his prior belief that the *ousia* of God cannot be grasped by the human mind. Human knowledge of the one simple God is necessarily fragmentary and complex. According to Basil, only the Son and the Spirit know the substance of God; human knowledge

86. Ibid. (SC 299:204, 16–17).

87. See ibid. (SC 299:206, 33–208, 48).

88. Sesboüé comments on this point: "Cette belle argumentation qui décrit la démarche anagogique de notre connaissance de Dieu par le jeu des négations et des affirmations se termine de manière très formelle et quelque peu sophistique. Nos négations à propos de Dieu sont en fait des négations d'une négation. Elles expriment donc une positivité. Les négations peuvent servir à exprimer quelque chose de la substance de Dieu. Après avoir exprimé de manière brillante l'aspect analogique de tout discours humain sur Dieu, Basile s'arrête sur un argument qui repose sur l'univocité formelle de l'attribut négatif" (*Contre Eunome,* 1:208–9, n. 1).

89. *Con. Eun.* 1, 15 (SC 299:224, 1–4).

90. Ibid. (SC 299:226, 29–35).

91. Ibid. 1, 16 (SC 299:228, 13).

of God is otherwise. As Basil writes, "We are led from the activities of God to knowledge of his goodness and wisdom; we reflect on the creator through his creatures."[92] Not even in the Scriptures does God reveal his substance; the inspired authors' use of figures and allegories indicates this.[93] So, no one concept or set of concepts, including *agennêtos,* affords comprehension of God's substance. Of course, Basil gives so much attention to *agennêtos* because of its centrality in his opponent's theological system, but his arguments stand in the larger context of his teaching both on concepts, in general, and on the incomprehensibility of God's *ousia.* God is described by many and varied concepts, themselves derived by rational reflection upon God's activities in creation and salvation.

In sum, according to Basil, the divine *ousia* may be described, but not defined. It is easier to state Basil's position on what the divine *ousia* is not than to state what it is. It is neither Aristotle's *ousia prôtê* nor *deutera.* It is indebted to Stoic thought, but this is not too helpful, for it is not material and immanent but spiritual and transcendent. The divine nature is simple and uncomposed, and by virtue of this, *ousia* and power *(dynamis)* coincide in God.[94] Furthermore the *ousia* of God is wholly light, wholly life, and wholly goodness.[95] It remains, however, ultimately unknowable, while admitting description by many and varied predicates, none of which holds preeminence over the others. Finally that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit does not violate divine simplicity. Rather, the divine plurality must be explained—insofar as possible—within the rules for thinking and speaking about the one God.

Basil's View of Divine Plurality

The words that Basil uses to describe the divine plurality provide a window through which one may see his understanding of Father, Son,

92. Ibid. 1, 14 (SC 299:220, 16–19).
93. See ibid. 1, 14 (SC 299:220, 19–222, 23).
94. See ibid. 2, 32 (SC 305:134, 18–20).
95. See ibid. 2, 29 (SC 305:122, 17–21).

and Holy Spirit. It is especially here that Basil weaves together the Greek and the Christian. He explains divine plurality in the light of the theological truths already established: divine transcendence, simplicity, and unknowability. The vocabulary of divine plurality has its place in Basil's larger theological vision.

Just as Basil employs a vocabulary and grammar of divine oneness to articulate part of his theological vision, so also will he use certain words and establish guidelines in speaking of divine plurality. In *Against Eunomius,* the most significant theological terms for the divine plurality are *idiôma* and *idiotês* (both of which may be translated "specific character" or "unique feature"). Basil does not use *hypostasis* here as he later will, viz., as a technical term for what is three in God, but in certain ways he anticipates that later usage. Basil uses the word Trinity *(Trias)* three times in *Against Eunomius,* but these uses do not illuminate how he conceives of the divine plurality. Furthermore, *prosôpon* (loosely translated as "person") had not, at this point, achieved any status as a Trinitarian technical term.[96] The word is used only once in a properly theological sense—Basil accuses Eunomius of covering his blasphemy by using the terms "the unbegotten" and "the begotten" rather than considering the persons, Father and Son.[97] But this single instance yields no insight into how Basil describes what is three in God. *Tropos tês hyparxeôs,* another Trinitarian phrase associated with Basil, does not occur in *Against Eunomius.* What Basil has to say about the vocabulary of divine plurality *(hypostasis, idiôma,* and *idiotês)* at the same time fills out his view of the "grammar of divine plurality," the rules that guide thought about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Hypostasis was one of the most important Greek words in the Trinitarian thought of the fourth century because it became later enshrined

96. The word occurs only eleven times in *Against Eunomius:* once it refers to the accusers of Eunomius at his trial (see 1, 2); four times it is in a quotation from or allusion to Scripture and in these instances simply means "face" (see 3, 1; 3, 3; 3, 4; and 3, 7); five times Basil uses the word to indicate who is speaking in the Scriptures (e.g., God, the Father, the Lord, and Wisdom) (see 1, 8; 2, 17; 2, 18; 2, 20; and 3, 4); and once in a properly theological use in reference to the Father and the Son (see 1, 16).

97. *Con. Eun.* 1, 16 (SC 299:230, 28–35).

in the Eastern formula (one *ousia,* three *hypostaseis*) that measured orthodox Trinitarian belief.[98] Though Basil does not use *hypostasis* in *Against Eunomius* as a technical term for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as he later does, his use of it in *Against Eunomius* provides the context for that later usage.[99] Three features of Basil's use of *hypostasis* stand out: (1) *hypostasis* is, for Basil, largely synonymous with *ousia;* (2) *hypostasis* has concrete connotations, and it gives *ousia* these same connotations when the words are used together; and (3) hints of Basil's later Trinitarian use of *hypostasis* (as distinguished from *ousia*) emerge especially in those few passages where *hypostasis* is used without any allusion to *ousia.*[100]

The first point, that Basil uses *hypostasis* as a synonym for *ousia,* is readily demonstrated by a few examples. Basil introduces the word *hypostasis* in the course of his argument with Eunomius over the meaning of concepts. As mentioned, Eunomius holds that what is said conceptually *(kat' epinoian)* of a thing ceases to exist as the sound of the voice passes away; the existence *(to einai)* of concepts is coterminous with their enunciation.[101] Basil argued against this and assigned to concepts a really existing referent, and in this context one finds his first use of the word *hypostasis.* Eunomius maintains that concepts have no existence outside the act of their utterance, and Basil restates this position in the following way, speculating on the motive behind Euno-

98. While the Cappadocians get the credit for this formula, it does not appear in Basil's works, and it appears rarely in those of the Gregories. See Lienhard, *"Ousia* and *Hypostasis,"* 99–107.

99. Basil uses the word *hypostasis* eighteen times in a theological sense in the three books of *Against Eunomius,* three of which occur in quotations of Hebrews 1:3: see *Con. Eun.* 1, 18 (SC 299:236, 27); 1, 20 (SC 299:244, 11); and 2, 32 (SC 305:136, 48).

100. Bernard Sesboüé approaches Basil's use of *hypostasis* in *Against Eunomius* differently. As Sesboüé has it, Basil does not use *hypostasis* to refer to what is three in God because it is an ambiguous term, and Eunomius would understand it as "substance" (see Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité,* 130–37). I will argue that Basil's use of *hypostasis* at different points in his career has as much to do with his own theological development as with the audience to whom he is writing. Turcescu makes a point similar to mine, but in a different way: he sees *hypostasis* in *Against Eunomius* as having one of four meanings, substance, subsistence, substratum, and person (see Turcescu, *"Prosôpon* and *Hypostasis,"* 375–79).

101. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 5 (SC 299:180, 127–29), citing Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 8, 3–5, in Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 42–43.

mius' position: "He denies that the unbegottenness is considered a concept referring to God. Hence, he thinks that it will be easy for him to attempt to identify unbegottenness and substance *(ousia)*. From this, he thinks that he can undeniably show that the only begotten Son is unlike the Father according to substance itself. On account of this he clings to the speaking of a concept, which signifies nothing at all, but has put an end to its existence *(hypostasis)* in the very utterance alone."[102] In restating Eunomius' position, Basil substitutes *hypostasis* for *to einai.* They are largely synonymous except that the connotation of *hypostasis* stresses actual real existence as opposed to conceptual or merely mental existence. Here *hypostasis* is not opposed to *to einai* (or *ousia*) or distinguished from it, but simply emphasizes an aspect of it—its real existence.[103] Basil uses some antonyms for *hypostatic* existence, and they, in turn, make the meaning of *hypostasis* clearer. Centaurs have no real existence and are called *anyparktos* ("unreal"),[104] and the imaginary inventions of poets and painters are called *anypostatos* ("unsubstantial").[105] Thus *hypostasis* here simply means "really existing thing."

Basil uses *hypostasis* with a similar meaning in the unique expression *tropos tês hypostaseôs.*[106] Again, its meaning is neither distinguished from nor opposed to that of *ousia.* Rather, in the context, their respective meanings are mainly the same. At this point in *Against Eunomius* Basil argues that unbegottenness cannot designate God's substance for "unbegottenness" concerns not what God is, but how he is, i.e., by what means he has his existence. Basil uses an analogy with Adam to make his point about God: "He who says that the unoriginate is sub-

102. *Con. Eun.* 1, 5 (SC 299:180, 130–182, 137).

103. Basil uses *hypostasis* with the same meaning a few lines later: "He [Eunomius] does not say that the concept signifies something, albeit something unreal; rather, he says that the name is altogether meaningless, that it has existence *(hypostasis)* only in its utterance" (*Con. Eun.* 1, 6 [SC 299:186, 36–39]).

104. Ibid. 1, 6 (SC 299:184, 6). See also ibid. 1, 6 (SC 299:186, 35).

105. Ibid. 1, 6 (SC 299:184, 29). See also ibid. 1, 6 (SC 299:186, 40). These are the only two instances of this adjective in *Against Eunomius.*

106. This expression occurs once in *Against Eunomius,* the only time in the whole of Basil's corpus.

stance resembles him who, when someone asks 'what is the substance of Adam and what is his nature?' answers that Adam was formed not from the union of man and woman, but from the hand of God."[107] The question, as Basil explains, does not seek the manner of Adam's existence *(tropos tês hypostaseôs)* but his material substrate *(hylikon hypokeimenon),* a term that Basil uses explicitly to define *ousia.*[108] He contrasts here not *hypostasis* and *ousia* (or *hypokeimenon*) but the manner of something's existence and its definition; his point is not to distinguish the two terms.[109]

In some places Basil speaks of the *hypostasis tou Monogenous* ("*hypostasis* of the Only-Begotten") but in these he does not distinguish *hypostasis* from *ousia.* For example, Basil disputes Eunomius' interpretation of Acts 2:36, which reads: "God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Eunomius had applied this verse to the substance of the Son,[110] thus making him a creature.[111] Basil, however, attributes the verse to the Son within the economy of salvation rather than to the eternal Son, for "the Apostle's thought does not yet present to us the existence *(hypostasis)* of the Only-begotten before the ages."[112] As the very next sentence reveals, Basil understands *hypostasis* here as nearly synonymous with *ousia.* He writes: "For clearly he [the Apostle] is not speaking about the substance *(ousia)* itself of God the Word, who exists in the beginning with God, but about his self emptying in the form of a slave and about his taking the body of our humiliation and about his being crucified out of weakness."[113] Basil similarly uses *hypostasis* and *ousia* in a later argument about the question of time *(aiôn)* existing before the Son. He rails against those who make the *ou-*

107. *Con. Eun.* 1, 15 (SC 299:226, 29–33).

108. See ibid. (SC 299:226, 33–35); for the definition of *ousia* as *hylikon hypokeimenon,* see ibid. 2, 4 (SC 305:20, 11–12).

109. In this text, Hübner sees Basil for the first time distinguishing between *ousia* and *hypostasis;* the text does not support this position (see Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa," 481).

110. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 26, 17–18.

111. Eunomius often calls the Son *gennêma kai poiêma,* which Sesboüé translates as "rejeton et créature." See, for example, Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 12, 2–3.

112. *Con. Eun.* 2, 3 (SC 305:16, 3–5).

113. Ibid. (SC 305:16, 5–9).

sia of the Only-Begotten posterior to the ages[114] and insists that nothing can temporally precede his *hypostasis.*[115]

Basil's interpretation of Hebrews 1:3—"He is the reflection [*apaugasma*] of God's glory and the exact imprint [*charaktêr*] of God's very being [*hypostasis*]"—confirms his use of *hypostasis* as a synonym for *ousia.* This text hinders those who wish to distinguish *ousia* and *hypostasis* in order to give technical linguistic expression to Trinitarian belief.[116] Basil, however, does not stumble over it in *Against Eunomius.* In point of fact, he uses the text only to repudiate Eunomius' radical subordinationism; the Son cannot be less than the Father because he is the *charaktêr tês hypostaseôs* of the Father. When Eunomius makes the Son a stranger to the Father and destroys the communion between them, the Son cannot be thought of as the image [*eikôn*] of the Father, or as his resplendence [*apaugasma*], or as the imprint of his being [*charaktêr tês hypostaseôs*].[117] Similarly, because the Son makes known the Father, he is no creature, but the true Son, the image of God, and the imprint of his *hypostasis.*[118] *Hypostasis* in Hebrews 1:3 refers to what the Father and Son have in common, not to what makes each unique, and this is how Basil takes the passage. Indeed, the only theological use of *homoousios* occurs in connection with a quotation from Hebrews 1:3. Basil writes: "For 'radiance' was said of him for this reason, that we may know his connectedness and the 'character of his being,' that we may thoroughly learn the *homoousion.*"[119] Basil finds no difficulty in interpreting this passage from Hebrews and consistently uses it to show that the Son is not subordinate in being to the Father.

Not only does Basil use *ousia* and *hypostasis* synonymously, but he also shows—and this was the second point mentioned above concern-

114. Ibid. 2, 13 (SC 305:48, 22–25).

115. Ibid. (SC 305:48, 25–50, 28). See also *Con. Eun.* 2, 14; and 2, 17.

116. Gregory of Nyssa makes this point; see Basil's Ep. 38, trans. Deferarri, 219–23.

117. *Con. Eun.* 1, 18 (SC 299:236, 25–27).

118. Ibid. 2, 32 (SC 305:136, 46–48).

119. Ibid. 1, 20 (SC 299:244, 9–11). For the other (non-theological) uses of *homoousios* in *Against Eunomius,* see the following: (1) 2, 4 (bis) where Basil uses it of human beings and denies it of persons and God; (2) 2, 10 where he uses it of creatures; and (3) 2, 19 where he uses it of human beings and the works of their hands.

ing Basil's use of *hypostasis*—that *hypostasis* can have more concrete connotations and can lend these connotations to *ousia* itself. The case for this finds its most convincing evidence in a passage in which Basil refutes Eunomius' contention that difference of names implies difference in substance *(ousia)*. Basil begins with a simple assertion: no one of good sense thinks that "where the names are different, the substances [*ousiai*] are necessarily different."[120] The use of the plural here *(ousiai)* connotes concreteness. Basil's remarks a few lines later confirm this. Names, he maintains, denote not the substances but the individual characteristics of things.[121] He offers an example. "Peter" does not call to the mind Peter's substance but the properties that are his own: Son of Jonas, from Bethsaida, brother of Andrew, patron of fishermen, and the one on whom the Church is founded.[122] "None of the properties," writes Basil, "is his substance [*ousia*], taken in the sense of subsistence [*hypostasis*]."[123] This last assertion serves not only to equate *ousia* and *hypostasis* but to confirm the concrete connotations of *ousia* in this context—*ousia* is taken in the sense of *hypostasis,* not vice versa, and *hypostasis,* etymologically and historically, is the more concrete term.[124] In the next chapter of *Against Eunomius,* Basil explicitly applies the distinction between the substance and properties *(idiômata)* to the Father and the Son. The names "Father" and "Son" express properties and not substance.[125] In this context *hypostasis* is on the side of substance *(ousia)* rather than that of properties *(idiômata)*.[126]

120. Ibid. 2, 4 (SC 305:18, 1–3).
121. Ibid. (SC 305:18, 7–20, 9).
122. Ibid. (SC 305:20, 9–17).
123. Ibid. (SC 305:20, 18).
124. See Köster, "Hypostasis," 572–89. Köster draws upon Dörrie, "'Υπόστασις", 35–93. See also Witt, "'ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ," 319–43.
125. *Con. Eun.* 2, 5 (SC 305:22, 1–5).
126. Other instances of *hypostasis* confirm the conclusion thus far reached: (1) *Con. Eun.* 2, 6 (SC 305:26, 9–14): "For surely from the word 'to beget' the weak will think that there is some division and transference and flowing of the substance *(ousia)* of the begetter; but he will not be led to suppose that matter is brought in from without, from nonexistence for the subsistence *(hypostasis),* according to you, of the creature"; (2) ibid. 2, 9 (SC 305:36, 21–23): "Yet he who does not introduce the idea of some subsistence [*hypostasis*], but only indicates the relation towards another, how is it not of extreme madness to ordain by law that this is substance [*ousia*]?"; (3) ibid. 2, 16 (SC 305:64, 37–42): ". . . the whole nature of the Father stamped in the Son as in a certain seal; if you wish, as the sub-

In *Against Eunomius* Basil does not set out to distinguish *ousia* from *hypostasis* nor, *a fortiori,* to make such a distinction the foundation of his Trinitarian thought. Nonetheless—and this was the third feature mentioned above about the use of *hypostasis* in Basil—the seeds of this distinction are present here. In other words, Basil's later use of *hypostasis* may be seen as a development of this earlier use. The possibility of this development lies especially in the fact that although Basil uses *hypostasis* in connection with *ousia,* the former often functions to make the latter more concrete and particular. Consider, for example, one of the two times in which Basil writes of the *hypostasis* of the Holy Spirit.

> But suppose that on account of the simplicity and incompositeness of the divine nature he [Eunomius] posits a concurrence of power and substance *(ousia)* in God, and suppose that on account of the goodness present in God he would say on the one hand that the power of the Father moves wholly into the generation of the Son and on the other hand again that the power of the Only-begotten moves wholly into the subsistence *(hypostasis)* of the Holy Spirit. It would follow that the power and the substance *(ousia)* of the Only-begotten would be contemplated from the Holy Spirit, and again the power and substance *(ousia)* of the Father would be comprehended from the Son.[127]

Notably, Basil here mentions *ousia* both in the context of the one simple divine nature and in that of the individuals, Father and Son, but the focus is on the latter use. He gives both *hypostasis* and *ousia* concrete connotations: all of the power of the Son is contained in the Holy Spirit's *hypostasis,* and the Father and the Son each has his own *ousia. Hypostasis* is almost used implicitly here in the way that it will be later explicitly used, i.e., as a technical term for what is three in God. The concrete use of *ousia,* however, militates against any strict distinction between

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stance [*hypostasis*] of the arts comes as a whole into the pupils from the teachers, with nothing lacking to the teachers and perfection accruing to the students"; and (4) ibid. 2, 19 (SC 305:78, 43–48): "and [Eunomius] says that the substance [*ousia*] of the Son is not regarded as common with things from nothing. And further, if the God of all, because he is unbegotten, holds as unnecessary the transmission of the begotten, and if all the begotten hold a common subsistence [*hypostasis*] from nothing, how are those things not necessarily joined together according to nature?"

127. Ibid. 2, 32 (SC 305:134, 18–27).

the two words. The same applies to the earlier consideration of *hypostasis tou Monogenous;* hints of the later use of *hypostasis* are present—it is a concrete term predicated of an individual—but its use as a synonym for *ousia* prevents any precise differentiation between the two words.

Basil's use of *hypostasis* in *Against Eunomius* most clearly anticipates his later use of the word in two passages. The first is unique in *Against Eunomius.* Basil is arguing for the divinity of the Holy Spirit and garners the support of the Scriptures: "For on account of this, I think, the Seraphim crying out the thrice holy have been recorded by Isaiah: because holiness according to nature is contemplated in the three subsistences *(hypostaseis)*."[128] Furthermore, there is no mention of *ousia* in this context, only the divine nature *(physis);* unlike other places, here *hypostasis* stands alone—its meaning is not qualified by *ousia,* and it does not qualify *ousia*'s meaning. The second of the passages occurs in the last paragraph of the entire work. Basil is again writing of the *hypostasis* of the Holy Spirit, trying to prove that he is not a creature. And so, he asks how that which belongs to the divine nature can be counted among created things.[129] But neither does Basil wish to invite a charge of modalism, and so he adds: "and let no one think that to deny that the Spirit is a creature is to abolish his existence [*hypostasis*]."[130] Neither in this passage is there any mention of *ousia,* in whose light the meaning of *hypostasis* is often otherwise determined.

In sum, Basil at times anticipates in *Against Eunomius* his later use of *hypostasis* as a Trinitarian technical term for what is three in God, a hallmark of his synthesis of Greek and Christian thought. Nevertheless, *hypostasis* clearly has not yet achieved this status, for Basil so often uses it as a synonym for *ousia.* Even in this role as a synonym *hypostasis* brings its own connotations, at times coloring the meaning of *ousia* and making it more concrete.

Though for Basil in *Against Eunomius, hypostasis* does not find a place as a technical term for what is three in God, *idiôma* and *idiotês*

128. Ibid. 3, 3 (SC 305:154, 2–5).

129. Ibid. 3, 7 (SC 305:172, 34–36).

130. Ibid. (SC 305:172, 36–174, 38). Sesboüé infers that by this statement Basil is clearing himself of any charge of modalism (see *Contre Eunome,* 2:173, n. 4).

very nearly do. Their use, however, is not rigid: Basil uses both of the one God as well as of the Father and the Son.[131] There appears to be no difference in meaning among *idiôma, idiotês,* and the less frequently used *charaktêr.* How then do these words function in Basil's understanding of the Godhead?[132]

The difference between Father and Son lies not in substance but in number and in the properties that characterize each.[133] This distinction between substance and properties Basil illuminates in his analysis and in his explanation of names. What applies to Peter and Paul applies to Father and Son: names do not designate substances but the properties that characterize each individual.[134] Basil applies the substance/property distinction to the Godhead in *Against Eunomius* 2, 28, by far his most extended treatment of the proper understanding of the divine plurality. Begottenness and unbegottenness are distinct intelligible properties *(idiotêtes gnôristikai)* of the divine *ousia,* and they lead, respectively, to the ideas of Father and Son.[135] By their uniqueness these properties or characteristics make a distinction in that which is common but without disrupting the connaturality *(homophyes)* of the substance *(ousia)*.[136] Nor do these distinct properties violate the divine simplicity.[137] Opposing properties do not imply distinct substances. Basil writes: "For this is the nature of properties: to show the differ-

131. See: (1) ibid. 1, 10 (SC 299:204, 19–206, 23): "Certainly in order that we may know the unique property of God, in the matter of language about God, we do not forbid one another to reduce our thoughts to what is not fitting, in order that men never think that God is one of the mortal, visible or created beings"; (2) ibid. 1, 18 (SC 299:236, 11–15): "As the words 'taking the form of a slave' indicate that our Lord has been begotten in the substance of mankind, so also the words 'existing in the form of God' surely describe the property of the divine substance"; and (3) ibid. 2, 10 (SC 305:40, 25–27): "For the difference between the Son and the others is not in the relation towards something but the superiority of God over things that corrupt is conveyed in the property of his substance." The uses of the verb *charaktêrizô* correspond to those of *idiôma* and *idiotês;* they express verbally the meaning of these nouns whether they are used to explain the divine plurality or unity. See ibid. 2, 32 (SC 305:134, 31–33): "But if substance and power are the same thing, then that which characterizes the power will surely characterize the substance also."

132. On Basil's theory of properties, see Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité,* 105–11.

133. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 19 (SC 299:242, 40–44).

134. See ibid. 2, 4 (SC 305:18, 7–20, 9) and ibid. 2, 5 (SC 305:22, 1–3).

135. See ibid. 2, 28 (SC 305:118, 27–31).

136. See ibid. (SC 305:118, 31–120, 35).

137. See ibid. 2, 29 (SC 305:122, 17–23).

ence in the sameness of substance. And moreover, these properties themselves are often logically distinguished from one another in order to stand apart from their opposites. But the unity of the substance is not torn asunder."[138] Basil provides an analogy to strengthen his argument: one substance and substrate comprises all creatures, flying or walking, aquatic or terrestrial, rational or irrational, and these opposing properties do not destroy the unity of substance.[139] Finally, the properties alone of fatherhood and sonship do not suffice to account for the Father and the Son. "The divinity," writes Basil, "is common, but fatherhood and sonship are properties *(idiômata);* from the combination of both, of the common and the particular *(idiou),* the comprehension of the truth arises in us."[140] So then, the Father is unbegotten light, and the Son, begotten light; they differ only in being begotten and unbegotten, and not insofar as they both are light.[141] Neither divinity nor fatherhood (or sonship) alone leads to an understanding of the Father (or Son); the *addition* of properties (viz., fatherhood and sonship) to divinity is necessary.[142]

In many ways Basil's Trinitarian theology in *Against Eunomius* is clear and lucid: one cannot know the substance of God, yet the words that are predicated of him are not meaningless. They truly describe, but do not define, God. Basil's arguments here persuade. Questions arise, however, when it comes to his explanation of the divine plurality. Basil is clear that certain properties characterize the Father and others, the Son. And their distinct properties do not imply any division of the divine substance or violation of divine simplicity. But it is not that the Father *is* fatherhood, i.e., that property that characterizes him as an individual, but rather that he *has* fatherhood. Likewise, the Son *has* sonship; it is not that he *is* sonship. The weakness—if it may

138. Ibid. 2, 28 (SC 305:120, 43–47).
139. See ibid. (SC 305:120, 47–50).
140. Ibid. (SC 305:120, 35–37).
141. Ibid. (SC 305:120, 38–42).
142. Ibid. 2, 29 (SC 305:122, 10–13). This appears to contradict John Zizioulas' claim that "among the Greek Fathers [and especially St. Basil] the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological 'principle' or 'cause' of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the *hypostasis,* that is, *the person of the Father*" (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 40). See also Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 87–89. On one level Zizioulas is right; see below the discussion of biblical metaphor and divine communion.

be so called—at this stage in Basil's Trinitarian theology is that he has no *distinct* word for what the Father is and what the Son is. The Father is unbegotten *ousia* and the Son, begotten *ousia;* Basil implies so much when he says that the proper conception of Father or Son may be had by *adding* the common and the particular. The Father is the divine *ousia* plus fatherhood, and the Son is the divine *ousia* plus sonship.[143] Interestingly, this use of *ousia*—to answer the question, what is the Father (or Son)?—corresponds to the lack of a strict distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia.* In certain passages of *Against Eunomius, ousia* appears to acquire the meaning that Basil will later reserve for *hypostasis.* For all of his statements about *ousia* being common and shared, it takes a very concrete meaning when Basil calls the Father unbegotten *ousia* and the Son begotten *ousia.*

Basil's View of the Divine Communion

The question of the communion among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit differs from that of the oneness of God. The former asks how God can remain one in spite of his being in some way three—how there can be divine unity given the fact of divine plurality. The latter inquires into the oneness of God without necessarily supposing a Trinity. The Jew, for example, would entertain the second but not the first question. How Basil would have us think and speak about the one God, and how he would have us understand the divine plurality, we have already considered. But how does Basil understand the divine communion?

Basil uses many words to express the communion between the Father and the Son, and a study of these words reveals not only Basil's conception of this communion but also what rules guide such speculation. Basil employs a number of Greek words to express the relation between the Father and the Son: *henotês* ("unity"), *homoios* ("like"), *homoiotês* ("similarity"), *homoousios, homophyês* ("same in nature"), *homotimos* ("same in honor"), *koinos* ("common"), *koinônia* ("community"), *oikeios* ("kin"), *oikeiotês* ("kinship"), *oikeiôsis* ("kinship"), and *tau-*

143. See *Con. Eun.* 2, 28 (SC 305:120, 35–37).

totês ("identity"). Basil uses these terms in the context of three larger themes: the Son who is the image of the Father; the Son who makes known the Father; and the Son who is kin to the Father. These concrete images contrast, though not substantially, with Basil's two abstract treatments of divine communion,[144] and these passages must also be examined.[145]

Basil lends theological sophistication to the biblical metaphor of the Son as the Image *(eikôn)* of the Father; he explains the meaning of the metaphor using technical words such as *homoiotês, homoousios,* and *koinê ousia.*

Two of the most important of Basil's words for the divine communion—*homoiotês* and *koinos*—express the Son's relationship of image to the Father. The Son is no dead, fabricated, or conceptual image; rather, he is the living image who is life itself. Unvarying *(aparallakton)* similitude *(homoiotês)* of substance *(ousia)* characterizes this relationship.[146] The Son's being the image of the Father accounts for the exact *(aparallakton)* similitude *(homoiotês)* between them. Eunomius wrongly holds that the Son is light, as the Father is, but less bright, more obscure, and cloudy.[147] Such a position does not conform to true religion because it suppresses the similitude *(homoiotês)* of the image.[148] The Son has a substance exactly similar to the Father's because he is the image of the Father.

The Son's being image also informs the meaning of common substance *(koinê ousia)*. Eunomius denied the community of substance be-

144. See ibid. 1, 19; 2, 28.

145. There are some words and ideas about divine communion that do not fall under the categories just mentioned. These concepts deserve coverage here but are not at the center—at least in *Against Eunomius*—of Basil's understanding of divine communion. First, Basil uses *homotimos* of the Father and Son (see *Con. Eun.* 1, 25 [SC 299:262, 26]; 2, 31 [SC 305:128, 20]; and 2, 33 [SC 305:138, 35]). Secondly, he argues that a communion *(koinônia)* of names implies a communion *(to koinon)* or kinship *(oikeiôsis)* of substance (see ibid. 2, 24 [SC 305:102, 62–104, 70] and 3, 3 [SC 305:156, 14–16], respectively). Notably, the latter citation (3, 3) argues for the admittance of the Holy Spirit into communion with the Father and the Son.

146. Ibid. 1, 18 (SC 299:234, 6–236, 9).

147. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 19, 14–18 and *Con. Eun.* 2, 27 (SC 305:116, 49–52).

148. *Con. Eun.* 2, 27 (SC 305:116, 52–54).

tween the Father and the Son on the grounds that one is first and the other second in rank *(taxis)* and in time.[149] In response, Basil asks, "In things that have a common substance, what necessity is there that they be subordinated in order and that they be second in time?"[150] Basil answers that there is no such necessity because God can never be without his image who shines forth *(apaugastheisê)* atemporally from all eternity.[151] Because of this eternal bond, the image is called "resplendence" *(apaugasma)*. The image is also called the "imprint of God's very being" to teach us that it is consubstantial *(homoousios)* with God.[152] The communion of substance between the Father and the Son lacks subjection in time and order because God can never be without his image.

Basil uses the words *koinônia* and *oikeios* to hone technically the meaning of another biblical metaphor: the image of the Son and Spirit as the way to knowledge of the Father. The Father is known through the Son and through the Spirit; therefore, Son and Spirit share communion *(koinônia)* with him. They (the Father and the Son if not the Spirit) are kin *(oikeios)*.

According to Basil, the Son must have communion *(koinônia)* with the Father because in the Son the Father is seen, and through him, the Father is known. How, Basil asks, can the Son have revealed the Father in himself if there is no comparison or communion *(koinônia)* between them?[153] The dissimilar and the foreign cannot help us grasp the unknown.[154] Rather, "kin [*oikeios*] is naturally known by kin [*oikeios*]."[155] Here Basil mixes images: the Son is the route to knowledge of the Father because he is kin to the Father. Thus, when Eunomius makes the Father and Son strangers and strikes down their communion, he also destroys the way to knowledge of the Father.[156]

149. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 10, 1–7.

150. *Con. Eun.* 1, 20 (SC 299:242, 4–6).

151. Ibid. (SC 299:242, 6–244, 9). See also ibid. 2, 12, where Basil speaks of the eternal communion *(koinônia)* between Father and Son.

152. *Con. Eun.* 1, 20 (SC 299:244, 9–11); cf. Heb 1:3. This single theological use of *homoousios* in *Against Eunomius* expresses the relationship between God and his image; Father and Son, as such, are not mentioned in this context.

153. *Con. Eun.* 1, 17 (SC 299:234, 26–28).

154. Ibid. (SC 299:234, 28–30).

155. Ibid. (SC 299:234, 30).

156. Ibid. 1, 18 (SC 299:236, 16–18).

Basil uses the words *oikeios, oikeiotês, oikeiôsis* to express the Son's relation of kinship to the Father, and this kinship constitutes a very significant part of Basil's understanding of the divine communion.[157]

The *oikeiôsis* of the Father and the Son has its origin in the Father. In common usage, "to father" denotes "the passion of the one begotten and the kinship with him."[158] Of course, in regard to God the Father and his Son, "to father" does not denote passion but kinship, and moreover, one of nature and substance rather than grace.[159] "A father is he who supplies another with the source of existence according to a nature like [*homoios*] his own; and a son is he who has from another the origin of his begotten existence."[160] Thus, the verb "to father" leads to the idea of the similitude according to substance; but one must, Basil maintains, guard his thinking about God from base and bodily conceptions and think of "generation" in a way corresponding to the sanctity and impassibility of God.[161]

If the Father's generation of the Son is ineffable and incomprehensible,[162] then it stands to reason that the unity of substance that results from this generation will also remain ineffable and incomprehensible. The simplicity of God does not prevent the Son from receiving in himself similitude with the Father.[163] Eunomius conceives of similitude materially and on these grounds denies the divine likeness to the

157. Normally Basil does not speak of kinship in association with the God-image metaphor. But he says in *Con. Eun.* 2, 21 (SC 305:86, 30–33): "The divine will, starting out from the first cause as from some source, acts through the kindred image of God the Word." The image, God the Word, is kin to God. Basil also expresses this kinship between the Father and the Son in his often-used image of unbegotten and begotten light: "As he who confesses that the Father is light and that the Son is light (the concept of light being one and the same) will take the initiative to confess their kinship according to substance" (ibid. 2, 25 [SC 305:104, 9–106, 12]).

158. *Con. Eun.* 2, 24 (SC 305:98, 16–100, 18).

159. Ibid. (SC 305:98, 1–4). See also ibid. 2, 23. Basil speaks of the *oikeios, oikeiotês* or *oikeiôsis* according to *ousia* in 1, 5 (SC 299:178, 106); 2, 23 (SC 305:96, 60–61); 2, 25 (SC 305:106, 12); 2, 30 (SC 305:126, 18); and 2, 31 (SC 305:130, 49); and he mentions the *oikeiotês* or *oikeiôsis* by nature in 1, 27 (1:268, 29–30); 2, 24 (bis) (SC 305:98, 1–4 and 16–23); and 3, 3 (SC 305:156, 14–15).

160. Ibid. 2, 22 (SC 305:92, 49–51).

161. Ibid. (SC 305:90, 39–92, 44).

162. See ibid.

163. Eunomius makes this objection in *Lib. Apol.* 11, 1–13.

Son, for God is without quality and form.[164] But Basil affirms the similarity where Eunomius denies it; both the Father and the Son are free of all composition and perfectly simple.[165] As such, their similarity lies not in an identity *(tautotês)* of physical form or figure, but in substance itself; and an identity *(tautotês)* of power verifies their equality.[166]

We should pause for a moment over Basil's statement that Father and Son have an identity of power, for we can observe an important difference between Basil and Eunomius. What Barnes says of Gregory of Nyssa applies equally to Basil: "power is the natural expression of the essence, as it must be if it is to serve as the source of knowledge about the essence."[167] As Basil writes, "On the one hand if power has no communion with substance, how can there be a leading from works, which are the products of power, to the grasping of it. On the other hand, if substance and power are the same thing, then that which characterizes power will also in every way characterize substance. The result is that the works, as you say, do not lead towards the unlikeness of substance, but towards the exactitude of the similitude."[168] Thus, Basil and Eunomius conceive differently the relationship between nature and power. For Eunomius, in a sense, God is powerless; that is, the divine essence "can have no products at all."[169] The way that he understands it, divine ingeneracy and divine simplicity demand as much. So the Son is unlike the Father in essence. Basil, on the other hand and with other Pro-Nicenes, sees the relationship among substance, power, and product as a strong argument for the similarity of the Father and the Son. Power expresses substance; if Father and Son have the same works,[170] then they must have the same power, and if the same power, then the same substance.

164. In *Con. Eun.* 1, 23 (SC 305:54, 7–11). 165. Ibid. (SC 299:254, 11–13).
166. Ibid. (SC 299:254, 13–20).
167. Barnes, "The Background of Eunomius' Language," 236.
168. *Con. Eun.* 2, 32 (SC 305:134, 29–35).
169. Barnes, *The Power of God,* 178; see Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 9–10. The ingenerate essence cannot generate essentially (as a parent does a child), for, by definition, the ingenerate essence cannot be communicated to the generated. And it cannot generate nonessentially, for that would introduce accidents into the divine essence.
170. As we will see later, this is one of Basil's strongest arguments for the divinity of

Basil defends by abstract argument the divine communion that the biblical metaphors establish. Especially with the kinship and image metaphors, the Father is ultimately responsible for the Son's likeness to himself and, thereby, for the communion of nature or substance between them. But in Basil's abstract explanations, fatherhood and sonship are conceptually distinguished from divinity, and the connection between fatherhood and divine communion is severed. In these explanations the divine communion is traced back to a common *ousia* rather than to the Father and to the relationship that this fatherhood brings about.

Though these abstract passages are an important and necessary part of Basil's Trinitarian theology, they are secondary to the scriptural images, for it is these images that give rise to the insight that the abstract passages defend. Basil abstractly defends the community of substance of the Father and the Son, but it is the biblical images that establish this communion in the first place. Of course, Basil is interpreting the Scriptures in the light of certain assumptions about God. He assumes, for example, that God is immaterial and simple and transcendent and ultimately unknowable by human beings. But he does not "assume" that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; this truth the Scriptures teach him, and this same truth he tries to defend. Ironically, in defending the community of substance by abstract argument, Basil severs fatherhood from divine communion, and this fatherhood was responsible for the divine communion in the first place.

Eunomius, of course, rejects the community of substance of the Father and the Son for the reason that there cannot be both a common substance and the priority of the Father in rank and time.[171] He also rejects a materialistic understanding of this community of substance[172] and thereby leads Basil to set some parameters for thinking about divine communion. This constitutes Basil's first abstract consid-

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the Spirit. If the Spirit works sancitification and illumination, then he must share in the essence that has this power. See, for example, *De Sp. S.,* 15, 34–16, 37.

171. See ibid. 1, 19 (SC 299:240, 25–27), citing Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 10, 1–3.

172. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 9.

eration of the divine communion. "If, then," Basil writes, "he should conceive of the community of substance [*to koinon tês ousias*] as some kind of distribution and division of preexisting matter [*hulês proüparchousês*] into the things that come from it, then we ourselves would not accept this understanding—absolutely not!"[173] Anyone who teaches such a doctrine, says Basil, is just as impious as the Anomoians.[174] Basil then reveals his own understanding of the community of substance.

> We accept, however, the following understanding of the community of substance. One and the same explanation of substance [*tou einai*] should be attributed to both the Father and the Son. If, by hypothesis, the Father is considered to be light in substance [*tô hypokeimenô*], then the substance [*ousian*] of the Son too should be confessed to be light. Likewise, should someone render an account of the substance [*tou einai*] of the Father, the same thing would apply also to the Son. If the community of substance is thus understood, we accept this explanation and say that that belief is our own.[175]

Though Basil invokes the metaphor of light, this passage lacks the biblical metaphors of the image of God and the way to the Father; neither does Basil trace the community of substance back to the Father and the kinship that he produces in begetting the Son. Moreover, the employment of Stoic categories is evident in the clear use of *hypokeimenon* and *ousia* as synonyms; notably, this passage also demonstrates *to einai* to be freely interchangeable with *ousia* and *hypokeimenon.* The absence of concrete biblical images and the presence of philosophical language make this explanation of divine communion more abstract.

The severing of fatherhood and of communion of substance is more clearly revealed by the other abstract treatment of the divine communion.[176] "Unbegotten" and "begotten," Basil explains, are distinctive properties *(idiotêtes gnôristikai)* of the divine substance, and they lead, respectively, to the conceptions of the Father and the Son.[177]

173. *Con. Eun.* 1, 19 (SC 299:240, 27–30). 174. Ibid. (SC 299:240, 30–32).
175. Ibid. (SC 299:240, 32–242, 40).
176. I also considered this passage above in the analysis of divine plurality.
177. See *Con. Eun.* 2, 28 (SC 305:118, 27–31).

The Father does not secure the divine communion; the Son's similitude is not traced back to the fact that he is the Son of the Father, and sons resemble fathers. Rather, Basil here urges that the property of fatherhood (and sonship) does not destroy the divine connaturality or the unity of substance.[178] Basil analyzes fatherhood into a property of substance in his efforts to explain the divine plurality, the divine communion, and divine simplicity in spite of this plurality and communion. Thereby he gains a certain level of technical expression, evidenced by the use of *idiotês* and *idiôma;* but he loses the connection between divine plurality and divine communion that was afforded him by the image and kinship metaphors.

Conclusion

Because Basil prefers to use *homoios* and its cognates to express the relationship between the Father and the Son, *Against Eunomius* belongs to the first stage in the development of Basil's Trinitarian theology. Yet in this work Basil articulates a theological vision that will remain the foundation of his understanding of the Trinity. At the heart of this theological vision is the incomprehensibility of God and what this means for human language used of him. With words, one cannot define God's *ousia* though one is not thereby totally ignorant of it. Human words can truly describe God, for he really is good and powerful and just, but no single title or group of titles comprehends the divine substance. Furthermore, God remains simple in spite of the fact that he is known by many and varied concepts. This understanding of the simple infinite God remains unchanged in Basil's Trinitarian thought even as he struggles to develop language to express the divine plural-

178. See: (1) ibid. (SC 305:118, 31–120, 35): "For, as if certain characteristics and forms were contemplated in the substance, the properties on the one hand divide what is common by means of particular characteristics; on the other hand, the properties do not cut through the connaturality of the substance"; and (2) ibid. (SC 305:120, 43–47): "For this is the nature of properties: to show the difference in the sameness of substance. And moreover, these properties themselves are often logically distinguished from one another in order to stand apart from their opposites. But the unity of the substance is not torn asunder."

ity. Adequate language for the divine plurality cannot be purchased, in Basil's mind, at the cost of divine simplicity and transcendence—if God is not simple and transcendent then he is not God.

While Basil reflects upon the divine plurality in *Against Eunomius,* he will later refine his understanding. In *Against Eunomius,* Basil has no distinct word for what the Father and Son (as Father and Son) are. He will later use *prosôpon* and still later *hypostasis* for this purpose, but in *Against Eunomius* Basil does not so use *prosôpon* and makes no strict distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis,* often using them interchangeably. In *Against Eunomius* he simply calls the Father and the Son unbegotten and begotten *ousia.* Though he does have a word for the unique and distinguishing traits of each—fatherhood and sonship are properties *(idiômata* or *idiotêtes)*—he does not have a unique word for the subject possessing these traits. Basil will refine his understanding of the divine plurality in his polemic against Sabellianism.

Basil posits a communion of substance between the Father and Son because the Bible makes the Son kin to the Father, calls him the way to knowledge of the Father, and describes him as the image of the Father. In opposition to Eunomius and with abstract argument, Basil defends this biblical truth while at the same time safeguarding the simplicity of God—the fact that God is Father and Son does not make him composite. Opposing properties in the one divine substance do not violate its simplicity.

By the mid 360s Basil had done a great deal to bring into a single edifice the Greek and Christian traditions that he inherited. He used Greek technical language to clarify and defend biblical truth and interpreted the Bible according to metaphysical truths he knew (and altered) from Greek philosophy. But the structure that Basil is laboring to build is not yet finished. He still must remedy its two defects: it is not yet fully Nicene without his full acceptance of *homoousios;* and its account of divine plurality needs sharpening. The former problem Basil repairs in correspondence with Maximus and the latter in his polemic against Sabellianism, that heresy named after the third-century theologian who denied the eternal distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

Greek Words and Trinitarian Truth

TOWARD A NICENE FORMULA

The first stage in the development of Basil's Trinitarian thought was marked not only by the preference for *homoiousios* but also by an aversion to *homoousios.* The precise dating of Basil's works in the 360s presents some problems,[1] but this much can be said: Basil changed his mind on the appropriateness of *homoousios* as a theological term. He became a Nicene theologian, thereby beginning a new phase in the evolution of his Trinitarian thought.

Basil's Conversion to *Homoousios*

Basil revealed his change of mind in Ep. 9 to Maximus, written in 360–62 or in 363–65. In either case, and this is significant, Ep. 9 was composed after Ep. 361 to Apollinaris, which was written in 360. Ep. 9 signals a change in Basil's thought concerning *homoousios.* In 360 he was suspicious of the word, not knowing how it could be rightly predicated of the Father and the Son; indeed at this time he preferred "un-

1. See Appendix 2.

alterably like according to substance" *(homoios kat' ousian akribôs aparallaktôs)*. After his correspondence with Apollinaris, and probably after having written *Against Eunomius,* Basil preferred *homoousios* and accepted "unalterably like in substance" on the condition that it bore the same meaning as *homoousios.* Basil's acceptance of both phrases indicated that his thought was not confined to one fixed phrase or formula but rather was expressible by various words.

Basil's Ep. 9 to Maximus demonstrates both his linguistic flexibility and his theological development. On the one hand, he comes to prefer *homoousios;* but on the other hand, he remains flexible in his use of theological language.

Basil's treatment of Dionysius' work in Ep. 9 reveals his Trinitarian language to be plastic rather than rigid; he has no set formulae at this time. Maximus had written Basil requesting the works of Dionysius of Alexandria, the third-century bishop who followed Heracles as the head of the Alexandrian school made famous by Origen. Basil informs Maximus that he does not have the books ready to hand and, thus, cannot forward them. He proceeds, however, to give his evaluation of the works. In short, Dionysius, claims Basil, strayed too far to the opposite extreme in his attempts to correct the error of Sabellius. Basil offers an analogy: "I am wont to compare Dionysius with a gardener who, in trying to correct the bent of a young plant, by a miscalculation of the counter-strain, misses the mean, and draws the stem to the opposite side."[2] Against Sabellius, Dionysius rightly shows "that the Father and Son are not the same in substance [*tauton tô hypokeimenô*]" but, going too far, "he not only establishes a difference in persons [*heterotêta tôn hypostaseôn*][3] but also a difference in substance [*ousias diaphoran*], a diminution of power, and a variation of glory."[4] Interestingly, Basil affirms Dionysius' distinction of the Father and the Son *tô hy-*

2. Ep. 9, 2 (Courtonne, 1:38, 9–13); trans. Deferrari, 1:95.

3. Turcescu takes this use of *hypostaseis* to be Basil's language rather than Dionysius'. I take it to be Dionysius' and so will construe a bit differently Basil's progress in coming to use the term. See Turcescu, *"Prosôpon* and *Hypostasis,"* 380–81.

4. Ep. 9, 2 (Courtonne, 1:38, 15–21); trans. Deferrari, 1:95, 97.

pokeimenô but disagrees with attribution of an *ousias diaphoran.* This is puzzling considering the fact that in *Against Eunomius, ousia* and *hypokeimenon* were taken to be synonyms. From what he says in *Against Eunomius,* Basil—one might surmise—would say against Dionysius that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in fact one in *hypokeimenon,* one in substance. It must be kept in mind, though, that Basil is reporting Dionysius' Trinitarian vocabulary rather than offering his own.[5] In any case, Basil's acceptance of this different formulation of the distinction between the Father and the Son reflects a certain flexibility with Trinitarian language; Basil's Trinitarian thought, at this point in time, does not require a formula for its correct expression.

What he says about *homoousios* and *to homoion kat' ousian* in this letter makes the same point. Basil is not satisfied with criticizing Dionysius' language and ideas concerning the Godhead; he offers his own opinion of the right way to speak of such things. "I take," he writes, "'like according to substance' [*to homoion kat' ousian*] to be the same thing as 'consubstantial' [*homoousios*], but on two conditions: first, if 'unalterably' [*to aparallaktôs*] is attached to 'like according to substance'; and secondly, of course, if 'consubstantial' bears its healthy meaning."[6] Basil's approbation of "unalterably like according to substance" is not new, nor is his cautious awareness about the senses that *homoousios* can have, some appropriately predicated of the Godhead, some not. Surely this caution lay behind Basil's caveat here that "unalterably like according to substance" means *homoousios* only if *homoousios* is understood correctly. But the novelty of this letter is found in the priority that Basil gives to *homoousios* over *homoios kat' ousian aparallaktôs.*

The events of 359–60 in Constantinople account, at least partial-

5. On Basil use of *hypokeimenon* here, Drecoll observes that "der . . . Satz, daß Vater und Sohn im *hypokeimenon* nicht identisch *(tauton)* sind, kann für Basilius' Position in Anspruch genommen werden, da er sie als ausreichend gegen die sabellianische Position hinstellt." (Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 40) That is to say, Basil and Dionysius are both anti-Sabellian, and herein can be said to hold the same teaching in spite of the fact that Basil would not express this teaching by the words *"tô hypokeimenô diaphora."*

6. Ep. 9, 3 (Courtonne, 1:39, 1–4); my translation (cf. Deferrari, 1:97).

ly, for this shift in Basil's understanding. They certainly make sense of his new apprehensions regarding *homoios,* even though they may not explain the preference for *homoousios* (for the problems with *homoios* do not clear up, by themselves, those with *homoousios,* as expressed in Ep. 361). As Basil himself says, "if anyone eliminates the invariability of the likeness, as those in Constantinople have done, I become suspicious of the expression, on the ground that it diminishes the glory of the Only-Begotten. For, as you know," he continues, "we are often accustomed to conceive of 'likeness' on the basis of similarities that are sometimes faint and sometimes fall far short of the archetypes."[7] The reference to "those in Constantinople" points unmistakably to the crafters of the creed promulgated in 359 and 360 at the councils that met in Constantinople. Though Basil fled Constantinople before the council of 360, he witnessed firsthand the abuses suffered by the word *homoios* in the name of the quest for political and theological uniformity. In his *Apology* delivered at Constantinople in 359, Eunomius himself—after so openly arguing for the unlikeness in essence of the Son to the Father and after calling the Son *ktisma* and *gennêma*—accepts the likeness *(homoiotês)* of the Son to the Father in a certain manner of speaking.[8] *Homoios* was clearly known to Basil as a word that disguised, more than revealed, the theological positions of those who used it.

After explaining his concern with the use of *homoios* to express the relationship between the Father and the Son, Basil concludes this part of the letter saying, "I have therefore myself adopted 'consubstantial,' because I think that this term is less open to perversion."[9] It is important to note that *homoousios* does not guarantee the correct understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son; it is simply that, in Basil's newly formed judgment, *homoousios* is *less* open to perversion than is *homoios.* Earlier, in Ep. 361, Basil had given two

7. Ibid. (Courtonne, 1:39, 11–16); trans. Deferrari, 1:99.
8. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 21–22 and Kopecek, *A History,* 336–37.
9. Ep. 9, 3 (Courtonne, 1:39, 16–18); trans. Deferrari, 1:99 (altered).

possible misinterpretations of *homoousios* as applied to the Father and Son and asked Apollinaris how it could be rightly understood. Now, in Ep. 9, he not only properly understands *homoousios* but also prefers it as the best word to express the relationship between the Father and the Son. *Homoousios,* however, has not achieved formulaic status; it is not yet a watchword.

Basil does not give us in Ep. 9 any positive reasons for his shift to *homoousios.* Perhaps it is not going too far to speculate that Basil's move to *homoousios* was made all the easier by the fact that such a shift brought him into closer communion with Apollinaris and Athanasius and the West. Basil was very much interested in theological communion with Anathasius and the West later in his life, and it is not out of the question to assume that Basil was aware of the ramifications that his change of mind would have for his relationships with other theologians and for the theological communion of the Church as a whole.

Because in Ep. 361 Basil asked Apollinaris about the right meaning of *homoousios* and later adopted the word himself, it is natural to ask whether Apollinaris influenced Basil in this regard.[10] After all, Apollinaris' letter to Basil (Basil, Ep. 362) led Basil to view *tauton* and *tautotês* differently.[11] But did Apollinaris convert Basil to the *homoousios?* G. L. Prestige seems to think so, for Basil's correspondence with Apollinaris shows "that it was Apollinaris who called Basil's attention to the value of the synodical letter of Alexandria, and led his rather faltering mind onward from 'Semi-Arian' conservatism to a full appreciation of the Nicene faith."[12] Perhaps Prestige is right, but it is very difficult to determine the role that Apollinaris played in the development of Basil's thought on *homoousios,* for their respective Trinitarian the-

10. Kopecek opines that "while Basil never accepted Apollinarius' particular interpretation, the combination of Apollinarius' letter and Basil's reading of Athanasius' *De Synodis,* which was very conciliatory to the Homoiousians, seems finally to have persuaded the Cappadocian that homousion was a reasonably viable theological formula" (Kopecek, *A History,* 363). But, to my knowledge, that Basil read *De Synodis* has not yet been proved.

11. See chapter 2.

12. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics,* 98.

ologies differ considerably. V. H. Drecoll makes two points that are relevant here. First, Apollinaris' Ep. 362 lacks the emphasis of Basil's Ep. 9 on the denial of *parallagê* ("difference") in the being of the Father and Son. The second is that Ep. 9 lacks the chief themes of Apollinaris' Ep. 362: the concepts of *tauton* and *heteron;* the phrases *archê* of the Father and *ek archês* of the Son; and the interpretation of *meizôn* (greater).[13] Drecoll concludes that "in regard to dogmatic content, therefore, the influence of Ep. 362 is quite insignificant, because Basil does not use Ep. 362 for his own arguments."[14] "Nevertheless," Drecoll continues, "Ep. 9 presupposes Ep. 362 and 364, for Basil now sees clearly the danger, which the [*homoios kat' ousian*] involves, namely to be understood as synonymous with the [*homoios*] of the Constantinopolitan decrees."[15] Indeed, in Ep. 362 and 364, Apollinaris had pointed out some of the dangers of *homoios.* In Ep. 362 he writes, "those who have accepted substance in no sameness, bringing in likeness from outside, apply it to the Son, which indeed passes over also to men, that is, to those who are become likened to God."[16] And in Ep. 364, Apollinaris not only calls into question the suitability of the words themselves, *homoios kat' ousian,*[17] but ventures to know the intentions of those who use them. Those opposing Nicaea sought "the villainous destruction of *homoousios,* the pretext being that the term ought not to be understood on the basis of any denial of it in Greek; but a substitute expression for *homoousios* is *homoios kat' ousian*—an expression that was deliberately invented, confusedly named and maliciously devised."[18]

In sum, the second stage in the development of Basil's Trinitarian

13. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 41. 14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ep. 362 (Courtonne, 3:223, 44–47); trans. Deferrari, 4:339, 341.

17. Here, Apollinaris' criticism of "likeness" itself is difficult to understand. He says "since 'likeness' belongs to things which are in substance, that is, things substantial, in order, in fact, that a substance thus made like may be conceived of as substance, as, for example, an emperor's statue in relation to an emperor" (Apollinaris, Ep. 364 [Courtonne, 3:225, 25–226, 27]; trans. Deferrari, 4:345).

18. Ibid. (Courtonne, 3:225, 21–25); trans. Deferrari, 4:345 (altered). The issue of Basil's dependence upon Apollinaris will surface again in the context of the emergence of *hypostasis* as a technical term. See the next section of this chapter.

thought is marked by his endorsement of *homoousios* over and above *homoios* and its cognates. At least after 365, Basil rarely uses *homoios* and its cognates to describe the relationship between the Father and Son; after 365 Basil wholeheartedly commits himself to Nicaea and the *homoousion*.[19] But Basil's commitment to *homoousios* is not a fixation; his Trinitarian vocabulary does not become so rigid that *homoios* and related words are banned. In Ep. 236, Basil uses *homoousios* to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son, but he also rails against the Anhomoeans for destroying the glory of the Only-begotten and his *homoiotês* with the Father.[20] Basil does use *homoios* in *On the Holy Spirit,* but in conjunction with *isos* and *tautos.* Basil writes: "'He who has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn 14:9). He sees neither the character nor the form of the Father, for the divine nature is free from composition. Rather he sees the goodness of the will which is thought to be concurrent with substance, and which is not only similar and equal, but also identical in the Father and the Son."[21] Thus, Basil retains some of the linguistic flexibility evident in his Trinitarian thought before 365 while at the same time indicating a preference for *homoousios.*

The Emergence of *Prosôpon* and *Hypostasis* as Trinitarian Technical Terms

The third stage in the development of Basil's Trinitarian theology is the emergence of *prosôpa* as a word suitable to express the divine plurality, and the fourth, the emergence of *hypostasis* for the same purpose. These stages will be considered together, not only because of the brevity of the third stage but also because both *prosôpon* and *hypostasis* arise in similar ways as Trinitarian words, viz., in Basil's polemic against

19. Basil uses *homoousios,* for example, in Ep. 52, 90, 125, 140, 159, 214, 226, 236, and 263.

20. See Ep. 236, 1 (Courtonne, 3:47, 1–10).

21. See *De Sp. S.* 8, 21 (PG 32, 18C); my translation. Cf. Anderson, 41. Basil does not use *homoousios* a single time in *On the Holy Spirit.*

Sabellianism. Sabellius lived in Rome in the early third century and taught that there is one God only; the biblical names "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" describe not anything that really exists in God, but rather three ways or modes in which humanity perceives God.

Basil had for a long time tried to secure the condemnation of Marcellus of Ancyra, though he never succeeded. Basil and like-minded theologians saw Marcellus as a new Sabellius. Though Marcellus' teaching differs from Sabellius', both were eventually condemned for the same error, viz., denying in some way the eternal distinction among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Against Marcellus and his followers, Basil defends the confession of three *prosôpa* and forges the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis.*

Although he was aware of the Sabellians' error from an early date, for the first time in a homily *(Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos),* delivered around 372, Basil refutes the errors of the Marcellians whom he calls Sabellians.[22] The Sabellians "'deny "God from God"; they confess a son in name, but in deed and truth deny his real existence [*hyparxis*].' By 'word' they mean a mental [*endiathetos*] word, and by 'wisdom' a quality of the soul, and hence they say that Father and Son are one *prosôpon,* just as man is."[23] After refuting them, Basil advises the Sabellians not to fear the confession of the *prosôpa.*[24] Notably, he does not mention *hypostasis* in this context nor does he mention the Marcellian identification of *ousia* and *hypostasis.* In fact, the single instance of *hypostasis* in the homily designates what is one in God. Basil explains the metaphor of the image by drawing upon Hebrews 1:3.[25] "When you hear the word 'image' *(eikôn),* think of the splendor of glory *(apaugasma tês doxês)*."[26] But St. Paul teaches us that splendor *(apaugasma)* is the

22. This is Homily 24. For its dating, see Fedwick, *The Church,* 153. For a theological analysis, see Lienhard, "Ps-Athanasius," 365–89. On the theology of Marcellus himself, see Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum.*

23. Lienhard, "Ps-Athanasius," 371, quoting *Con. Sab. et Ar. et An.* 1 (PG 31, 601A).

24. *Con. Sab. et Ar. et An.* 3 (PG 31, 604D).

25. Hebrews 1:3 reads: "He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being."

26. *Con. Sab. et Ar. et An.* 4 (PG 31, 608B).

same thing as character *(charaktêr),* and glory *(doxa)* the same thing as *hypostasis.*[27] "So that, if the glory [or *hypostasis*] remains perfect and not at all diminished, then the splendor [or *charaktêr* or *eikôn*] proceeds perfectly."[28] In this somewhat convoluted analogy, *hypostasis* denotes the unity in divinity, for the archetype and the image share the same glory.[29] Thus, in *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos* Basil does not use *hypostasis* for what is three in God. Rather, *prosôpon* suffices to express the divine plurality. Basil promotes *prosôpon* in this role in polemic reaction to the teachings of Marcellus, the new Sabellius.

A confession of three *prosôpa,* however, was not sufficient to guard against the error of Sabellianism; Basil found it necessary to distinguish *hypostasis* and *ousia.* The distinction of *hypostasis* from *ousia* originates from, and develops within, a polemical setting.[30] Basil distinguishes *ousia* from *hypostasis* not under the influence of pagan philosophical conceptions of God[31] but in reaction to the thought of Marcellus of Ancyra and Paulinus of Antioch. More precisely, the distinction of *hypostasis* from *ousia* prevents one from falling into the errors of Marcellus and Sabellius by securing an unconfused understanding of divine plurality and divine unity.

Basil focuses on the confession of distinct *hypostaseis* only in reaction to the Sabellian/Marcellian identification of *ousia* and *hypostasis.* In Ep. 125 (373, the confession of faith dictated for Eustathius of Sebaste), for the first time Basil mentions this Sabellian error and its

27. Ibid. (PG 31, 608B).

28. Ibid. (PG 31, 608B).

29. See ibid. (PG 31 608B).

30. Joseph T. Lienhard, drawing upon the dogmatic letters, traces the history of Basil's distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* (see Lienhard, *"Ousia* and *Hypostasis,"* 105–6).

31. Quoting Hübner, Ritter explains why Aristotle's categories do not work to understand the meanings of *ousia* and *hypostasis:* "Und obwohl die Hypostase weder Substanz noch Akzidens ist, also schlechterdings unter keine der Kategorien fällt, unter denen Seiendes überhaupt ausgesagt werden kann, bezeichnet sie doch drei wirklich Seiende. Die Kategorien der antiken Metaphysik sind damit aufgehoben, die Hypostasen haben überkategoriales Sein." (Ritter, "Die Trinitätstheologie," 205); see Hübner, *Der Gott der Kirchenväter,* 18–19). Wolfson makes this mistake: see *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers,* 337. Wolfson also interprets a passage in Ep. 236 to "imply that he [Basil] has actually thought of the hypostases as individual species and of their common unity as a specific genus" (ibid., 337–38).

alleged endorsement by the Creed of Nicaea.[32] Basil insists that the Sabellians misuse the Creed of Nicaea when they support their identification of *hypostasis* and *ousia* with the anathemas of the Creed of Nicaea—"If anyone says the Son is of a different *ousia* or *hypostasis,* the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes him." Basil argues against the Sabellian reading of the anathemas. "For if the words revealed one and the same meaning, what was the need of each separately? But it is evident that, since some denied that the Son is of the substance [*ousia*] of the Father, and others said that He was not of the substance but of some other person [*hypostasis*], thus they condemned both positions as foreign to the opinion of the Church. For, when they came to revealing their opinion, they said that the Son was of the substance [*ek tês ousias*] of the Father, not going on to add "of the person" [*ek tês hypostaseôs*]."[33] Thus Basil not only denies Nicene support to the Sabellian identification of *ousia* and *hypostasis* but also garners that support for his own position. The Fathers at Nicaea require us to confess that the Father and Son are *homoousios,* and to confess each—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in his own *hypostasis.*[34]

The heretical (or at least soon to be—they were condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381) Marcellians were not the only ones to identify *ousia* and *hypostasis* and to speak of one *hypostasis* in God. Athanasius and his allies in the West preferred to speak this way, as did Paulinus in Antioch. Antioch above all witnessed the divisive effects of the Trinitarian controversy. At one point, no fewer than four men claimed possession of the see: Paulinus, the old-Nicene disciple of Eustathius; Meletius, whom Basil supported; Euzoius, an "Arian"; and Vitalis, an Apollinarian. Paulinus and Meletius competed for the recognition of the Pro-Nicenes, but Paulinus won the approval of the West. In Ep. 214, to Count Terentius, Basil communicates his knowledge that the Westerners had recognized Paulinus as the rightful bishop of

32. Ep. 125, 1 (Courtonne, 2:31, 26–31).
33. Ibid. (Courtonne, 2:31, 32–32, 40); trans. Deferrari, 2:263–65.
34. See ibid. (Courtonne, 2:32, 42–46).

Antioch. The Paulinians "I hear," says Basil, "are now even circulating a letter from the Westerners which entrusts to them the episcopate of the church of Antioch, but which misrepresents the most admirable bishop of the true church of God, Meletius."[35] Basil, then, is on the losing side of a power struggle in Antioch that furnishes the historical context in which he considers *prosôpon* and *hypostasis.*

Basil began a polemic with the Paulinians and thereby clarified the relationship among the varying Trinitarian technical terms: *hypostasis* will secure the proper meanings of both *prosôpon* and *homoousios.* Ep. 236 (ca. 376), to Amphilochius of Iconium, signals an important change in the polemic, both in its direction and in its subject. Basil now argues not against the Marcellians and Sabellians, whose teachings place them outside the communion of the Church, but against those within the communion of the Church who nonetheless confess only one *hypostasis* in God. Furthermore, the argument not only centers around *ousia* and *hypostasis,* but also around *prosôpon* and *hypostasis.* Ep. 236 hints at the change in polemic that Ep. 214, (376) to Count Terentius, makes explicit.[36] Ep. 214, in turn, must be understood in the light of the controversy revolving around Antioch.[37]

The "Arians" had accused the Paulinians of Sabellianism according to which *homoousios* implies *homoousios kath' hypostasin,* which would

35. Ep. 214, 2; trans. Deferrari, 3:229. Deferrari identifies this letter of which Basil speaks with the earlier of two letters from Pope Damasus to Paulinus concerning communion with the Apollinarian Vitalis (see Deferrari, 3:228–29 n. 2). André de Halleux, however, convincingly argues that Damasus's letter *Per Filium* (on the communion of the Apollinarians), is not the one of which Basil speaks; see de Halleux, "'Hypostase' et 'personne,'" 320–21. De Halleux makes the following suggestion: "dès lors une conjecture, peut-être risquée, se presente à l'esprit: l'acte de reconnaissance de Paulin comme seul évêque d'Antioche, à l'exclusion de Mélèce, ne se trouverait-il pas partiellement conservé dans la première partie du *Tomus Damasi?*" (ibid., 322); see 322–24 for his arguments.

36. Basil hints at the change in polemic when he says that those who identify *ousia* and *hypostasis* can only confess different *prosôpa,* and in hesitating to speak of three *hypostaseis,* fail to avoid the evil of Sabellius. See Ep. 236, 6 (Courtonne, 3:54, 22–28). See also Ep. 210.

37. Interestingly, in 371—that is, before writing *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos* in which without mentioning *hypostasis* he urges the Sabellians to confess the *prôsopa*—Basil wrote that Antioch was divided over the *prosôpa* (see Ep. 69, to Athanasius). Apparently, at this time he did not think that the confusion in Antioch resulted from disagreement between those who confessed one *hypostasis* and those who confessed two.

mean that the Father and the Son are the same "person," and there is no real distinction in the Godhead between Father and Son.[38] In Basil's mind, how the Paulinians relate *hypostasis* and *prosôpon* will determine whether or not they clear themselves of the "Arian" accusation that they are Sabellians. For Basil, the sense of *hypostasis* determines the sense of *prosôpon:* if *hypostasis* is synonymous with *ousia,* then *prosôpon* takes a Sabellian sense; if *hypostasis* is not synonymous with *ousia,* then it frees *prosôpon* of Sabellian connotations. Ep. 214 reveals why he thinks this way.

In Ep. 214, Basil reports the Paulinian position[39] or, perhaps more precisely, the position of the Paulinian creed, offered as a condition of reconciliation with the Meletians.[40] Basil writes: "But what could be more grievous than this calumny and more apt to make the many waver than if some of us should be found saying [*legontes*] that the *hypostasis* of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost is one, we who quite earnestly teach [*dogmatizôsin*] the distinction of the persons [*prosôpa*]. But Sabellius anticipated this same idea, when he said that God exists in one *hypostasis,* but is represented by Scripture with different distinctions according to the peculiarity of the need arising in each case. . . ."[41] Thus Basil thinks that "if some of us" should speak of God

38. The Council of Nicaea itself, of course, implied the words, *homoousios kath' hypostasin,* even if it did not imply the meaning thereby that the Arians gave to the phrase in opposition to the Sabellians. For in the creed Father and Son are *homoousioi,* and in the anathemas, *ousia* and *hypostasis* may be used as synonyms: "Those saying . . . that . . . [the Son] is from a different *hypostasis* or *ousia* the Catholic Church curses" (Hahn, ed., *Bibliothek der Symbole,* 161–62).

39. See de Halleux, "'Hypostase' et 'personne,'" 326–30.

40. Basil mentions this creed in Ep. 216, to Meletius; see Deferrari, 241. De Halleux concludes from his analysis of Ep. 214 that "il est donc pratiquement certain que la profession de pauliniens confessait bien les trois personnes, mais non pas l'une hypostase de la formule vieille-nicéenne" (de Halleux, "'Hypostase' et 'personne,'" 328). The absence of insistence upon *mia hypostasis* in Basil's understanding of the Paulinian construal of the Trinity probably indicates that Basil is considering the Paulinian Creed to the Meletians, a theological compromise of sorts, rather than the Paulinians' preferred way of speaking of the Trinity. De Halleux tentatively mentions that the Roman letter acknowledging Paulinus as the bishop of Antioch may have contained the formula of *one hypostasis* (ibid., 330).

41. Ep. 214, 3 (Courtonne, 2:204, 14–23); trans. Deferrari, 3:233 (altered). Earlier in this letter, Basil mentions the Arian opposition to *homoousios* as Sabellian (see Ep. 214, 3 [Courtonne, 2:204, 1–7]).

as one *hypostasis,* it would be a source of scandal, for no insistence on confessing three *prosôpa* could remove the likeness to Sabellius. Clearly, this "some of us" refers to the Paulinians. But a close reading reveals that, according to Basil, the Paulinians place the *tria prosôpa* and the *mia hypostasis* on different levels of theological discourse. As André de Halleux writes, "the best proof of the distinction of two levels of discourse is the fact that he [Basil] employs only the verb to say [*legontes*] for the 'one hypostasis', but for the 'three persons,' he uses the verbs 'to teach' [*dogmatizôsin*] or 'to confess' [*homologountes*]."[42] This distinction between "to say" and "to confess" is significant. Basil uses stronger language of the *prosôpa* because, to him, they are the stronger, the more solid of the Paulinians theological vocabulary. *Mia hypostasis* is "said" not "confessed"; the weaker language reveals, in Basil's mind, the weakness of the theological position. Basil does not want the Paulinians to stop *confessing* three *prosôpa,* but he does want them to stop *saying* one *hypostasis.*

Another passage in Ep. 214 clearly reveals Basil's understanding of the Paulinian Trinitarian confession: "If then they say that the Persons [*prosôpa*] are not subsistent [*anypostata*], the teaching is *ipso facto* absurd; but if they concede, as they do admit, that they subsist in a true personality [*hypostasis*], let them also enumerate them, in order that the idea of consubstantiality [*ho tou homoousiou logos*] may be preserved in the oneness of the Godhead, and that the recognition of the holiness of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the complete and perfect personality [*hypostasis*] of each of those named, may be proclaimed."[43] Thus, according to Basil, probably in their creed of communion offered to the Meletians, the Paulinians do not confess *anhypostatic* persons but neither do they confess three *hypostaseis,* which Basil insists is necessary to avoid a Sabellian interpretation of *homoousios.* De Halleux believes that Basil subtly accuses the Paulinians of Sabellianism by pointing out their refusal to confess three *hy-*

42. De Halleux, "'Hypostase' et 'personne,'" 327. Deferrari mistranslates this passage, rendering *homologountes* with "confusing" rather than "confessing" (3:233).

43. Ep. 214, 4 (Courtonne, 2:205, 15–206, 22); trans Defarrari, 3:235.

postaseis: "they are secretly attached to the formula of the one hypostasis."[44] In any case, it is clear that, for Basil, *hypostasis* secured the right interpretation of *homoousios,* for having distinguished *hypostasis* from *ousia* Basil rendered groundless the "Arian" charge that *homoousios* meant *homoousios kath' hypostasin.*[45] That is to say, "same in substance" *(homoousios)* can mean "same in person" *(homoousios kath' hypostasin)* only if substance *(ousia)* and person *(hypostasis)* are synonyms. But if substance *(ousia)* and person *(hypostasis)* are distinguished, then "same in substance" *(homoousios)* cannot mean "same in person" *(homoousios kath' hypostasin)*. *Homoousios* could not then have a Sabellian meaning.

Hypostasis also secured the orthodox interpretation of *prosôpon,* by freeing it from Sabellian connotations. *Prosôpon,* that is to say, could mean something like the English persona. One might adopt different personae while remaining all the while merely one person; a distinction in personae does not imply a real distinction. A difference of *prosôpa,* then, can be consistent with Sabellianism, which rests upon the identity of *ousia* and *hypostasis.* But once the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is made, Sabellianism is destroyed, and *prosôpon* can once again be rightly used because it is now synonymous with *hypostasis.* A distinction in *hypostaseis* must be a real distinction.

Where, however, did Basil get the idea to so distinguish *ousia* and *hypostasis?*[46] Drecoll suggests that Basil may have adopted the use of *hypostasis* from Dionysius of Alexandria. In Ep. 9, he cites the word as used by Dionysius but does not use it himself. In *Against Eunomius,* it is not used as a technical word for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but in *De Sp. S.* 72, Basil cites Dionysius again.[47] Drecoll's is not the only suggestion. At the end of a very interesting dissertation on Apollinaris'

44. De Halleux, "'Hypostase' et 'personne,'" 328.

45. In a letter (Ep. 52) of the same year (376), Basil wrote to the *Canonicae,* women who, without taking vows, dedicated themselves to works of charity and lived apart from men and often in community. In this letter, Basil argued that *homoousios* itself implied the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis,* thereby destroying the identity of *hypostasis* and introducing the perfect notion of *prosôpa.* See Ep. 52, 3 (Courtonne, 1:135, 1–136, 6).

46. I take up this question in an article, "The Influence of Apollinaris of Laodicea upon Basil of Caesarea," some of which is recapitulated here.

47. See Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 40 and n. 52.

Kata meros pistis, Kelley Spoerl considers the ramifications of her work and wonders whether Apollinaris might be responsible for Basil's use of *hypostasis.* Basil and the two Gregories get the credit for reconciling the theology of Athanasius, with its emphasis on the equality and unity among Father, Son, and Spirit, and the theology inspired by Origen and supported by Eusebius of Caesarea, with its emphasis on the distinction among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This view, of course, overlooks Apollinaris. Spoerl proposes a nice analogy to remedy this oversight. "If Basil was the talented jeweler," she says, "who crafted the crude mass of theological ore into a beautiful and symmetrical artifact, Apollinarius was the hard-working miner who tapped the diverse veins of fourth-century Trinitarian thought to unearth the raw materials for what became the Cappadocian settlement."[48] But did Apollinaris influence Basil so as to anticipate and even in some measure bring about the Cappadocian settlement? And do Basil's works reflect the Trinitarian language of *Kata meros pistis?*

There is no literary dependence between Basil's homily and Apollinaris' *Kata meros pistis.* There are, however, similar presentations of Sabellian, i.e., Marcellian, theology and a common assertion that the persons of the Trinity are not brothers but Father and Son; and this, both Basil and Apollinaris believe, clears them of the charge of ditheism. One brother is not the source of another, but the Father is the source of the Son. So, brothers cannot have one *ousia* but Father and Son can.[49] But these similarities do not provide enough evidence to say that Apollinaris influenced Basil, for this description of the Sabellian heresy and the rejection of the brotherhood of the persons of the Trinity are common features of fourth-century theology.[50]

In addition, Basil and Apollinaris differ in their use of *hypostasis.* The key reason why Apollinaris cannot be a forerunner of the Cappa-

48. Spoerl, "A Study," 375.

49. See *Kata meros pistis* 19 (*Apollinaris von Laodicea,* Lietzmann, ed, 173, 22–174, 1); trans. Spoerl, 385. See also *Con. Sab. et Ar. et An.* 4 (PG 31, 605C).

50. Basil's description of Sabellianism as well as that of Epiphanius are drawn from Ps-Athanasius, *Contra Sabellianos.* See Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum,* 229.

docian settlement, simply stated, is this. The Cappadocian settlement rests upon Basil's distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* precisely as a remedy for both Sabellianism and Arianism. While Apollinaris does, in fact, use *hypostasis* as a synonym for *prosôpon* to name what is three in God, unlike Basil, Apollinaris does not explicitly distinguish the terms and does not see the Sabellian problem as the identification of the terms. Moreover, Apollinaris employs *prosôpon* more often than *hypostasis,* while for Basil, *hypostasis* becomes the more important word. If Basil knew of Apollinaris' use of the word, that alone did not cause him also to use it. His polemic with the Old-Nicenes proved more influential than the practice of Apollinaris.

Leaving behind how *hypostasis* and *prosôpon* functioned in Basil's thought as he engaged in doctrinal debate, one may ask what exactly he meant by these words. To say that *hypostasis* secured the right interpretation of *prosôpon* is not to say what exactly it meant for Basil. Basil does not explicitly define these words,[51] but he does describe what they designate: *hypostasis*—and *prosôpon* rightly understood—denotes the combination of *ousia* and *idiôma.* Furthermore, this description reveals both the continuity and the lack thereof between Basil's earlier and later Trinitarian thought. Here Basil hones what is previously unclear. As was seen earlier in *Against Eunomius,* Basil has no word to describe what results from the addition of divine *ousia* and fatherhood (or sonship); the Father is simply unbegotten *ousia,* and the Son, begotten *ousia. Hypostasis* names the result of this addition of *ousia* and *idiôma* whereby one attains a proper conception of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

51. It must be remembered that Ep. 38 does not belong to Basil, but to Gregory of Nyssa. See the convincing and lengthy arguments of Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa." Ep. 38, 3, indeed contains a definition of *hypostasis* (Courtonne, 1:82, 10–83, 14): "[*Hypostasis*] is the conception which, by means of the specific notes that it indicates, restricts and circumscribes in a particular thing what is general and uncircumscribed, as is shown in many examples in Scripture and in the story of Job" (trans. Deferrari, 1:201). Prestige, naturally enough (for he wrote nearly thirty years before Hübner's proof), attributes the letter to Basil and, interestingly, criticizes his Trinitarian thought therein. In particular, Prestige points out the mistake of identifying *hypostasis* with *idioma,* for, thus defined, the *hypostasis* is not a particular *manifestation* of the divine essence (*ousia* + *idioma,* if you will) but the particularity without the divinity; see Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought,* 275–76.

Basil describes *hypostasis* as it relates to *ousia* and offers analogies for this relationship. "*Ousia* and *hypostasis* have the distinction that the common has with reference to the particular; for example, just as 'a living creature' has with reference to 'a particular man.'"[52] This analogy of the common to the particular may be misunderstood, for Basil uses the same word *(idion)* to describe both *hypostasis* and the particular property *(idiôma)* that marks a *hypostasis* as unique. But a *hypostasis* is not an *idiôma;* rather the *hypostasis* (an individual or particular subsistent) is the combination of *ousia* and *idiôma*—of the common *(to koinon)* and the particular *(to idion)*—and the *idiôma* makes the *hypostasis* perceptible.[53] *Idiôma* belongs to the order of knowledge, *hypostasis,* to the order of being. All of these distinctions, this adding and combining of concepts, serves clarity of thought about the Godhead and ensures the safe transmission of the faith.[54]

Minor Linguistic Developments

Besides the emergence of *prosôpon* and *hypostasis,* in the 370s there are also some less significant developments in Basil's Trinitarian vocabulary—he introduces *monarchia* ("monoarchy" or "single source/rule") and applies *homotimos* ("same in honor") to the Holy Spirit. At about the same time as Basil engaged in anti-Sabellian polemic, he wrote *On the Holy Spirit,* which did not take aim at the Sabellians but at the Eunomians and the falsely named Macedonians (pneumatomachians or Spirit-fighters).[55] The Macedonians denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit but had fewer reservations about that of the Son. Basil uses *ho-*

52. Ep. 236, 6 (Courtonne, 3:53, 1–3); trans. Deferrari, 3:401–3 (altered). See also Ep. 214, 4 (Courtonne, 2:205, 6–11). The relationship between 'living creature' and 'particular man' is not that between Aristotle's second and first *ousia;* divinity is not an abstract concept, or a species, and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not instantiations of such a concept nor members of such a species. Basil's choice of analogy here indicates not Aristotelian but Stoic influence.

53. See Ep. 236, 6 (Courtonne, 53, 11–22) and Ep. 214, 4 (Courtonne, 2:205, 11–15).

54. See Ep. 236, 6 (Courtonne, 3:53, 3–11).

55. On the connection, or rather lack thereof, between Macedonius and Macedonianism, see Hanson, *The Search,* 760–62.

motimos and *monarchia* as a part of his effort to persuade the Macedonians that the Spirit should be ranked with God. For this reason, his use of this vocabulary does not constitute a distinct fifth stage in the development of his Trinitarian theology. Rather, *On the Holy Spirit* is rooted in the fourth stage in his development, for therein Basil uses *hypostasis* and *prosôpon* to express the divine plurality.

Basil wrote *On the Holy Spirit* in 373 and 375,[56] answering the questions of Amphilochius of Iconium. The work has an A B A structure. If we leave aside the introduction and the conclusion, there are two treatises on prepositions (2, 4–8, 21; and 25, 58–29, 75) that form the first and last corresponding parts and the treatise on the Holy Spirit (9, 22–24, 57) that forms the center (and, therefore, central) part of the work.[57]

In the first treatise on prepositions, Basil argues against the heretics' interpretation of the use of prepositions in the Scriptures and charges that they learned this approach to prepositions from pagan philosophers. He demonstrates from the Scriptures that their interpretation is groundless.

The center, and central, part of Basil's treatise alternates between positive statements of his understanding of the Holy Spirit and refutations of the ideas of his opponents. In the positive statements, Basil presents the scriptural teaching on the Holy Spirit. He gives the titles of the Spirit, recounts the activities of the Spirit, and offers analogies for understanding his communion with the Father. In the refutations of his opponents, Basil takes on those who refuse to rank the Spirit with the Father and the Son; those who deny the Spirit's role in baptism; those who number the Holy Spirit under the Father and the Son and subordinate him; and those who give the Spirit a middle position between God and creatures.

In many ways this work is a treatise on prepositions for Basil spends

56. See Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 16–17.

57. This construal of the structure of the work differs slightly from that of Pruche. See "Introduction," 39–63, especially 39–43. See also Pouchet, "Le traité de saint Basile," 325–50.

much time defending the prepositions used in his doxology, but, for our purposes, it is more pertinent to note that *On the Holy Spirit* witnesses both the linguistic developments in his Trinitarian theology and the presence of his enduring theological vision. Linguistically, he applies *homotimos* to the Spirit and introduces *monarchia* into his Trinitarian vocabulary. He uses these words not so much for their ability to express soundly the mysteries of the Godhead (though they do), but to persuade his audience, the Macedonians.[58] Also, the theological vision that Basil laid out in *Against Eunomius* endures as the coherent center of his Trinitarian thought, and in *On the Holy Spirit* he extends a biblical image of Father and Son to include the Holy Spirit—one of the biblical images that was at the heart of his understanding of divine plurality.

Before we consider Basil's use of *homotimos* and *monarchia,* two points should be made about Basil's use of *prosôpon* and *hypostasis* in *On the Holy Spirit.* First, though he uses *hypostasis* more than twice as often as *prosôpon,* he does not use the former to ensure the right understanding of the latter.[59] Such a relationship between *prosôpon* and *hypostasis* is unnecessary, given Basil's audience. Neither the Macedonians nor the Anhomoeans would interpret *prosôpon* in a Sabellian sense. Because there is no danger of this, Basil need not insist that *hypostasis* be used exclusively or that *prosôpon* be used only if accompanied by *hypostasis.* Secondly, Basil's Trinitarian vocabulary remains flexible enough, even at this stage, to use *hypostasis* to designate something other than the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. Taking issue with the Macedonians' way of "numbering" the Godhead, Basil writes: "Do they define *subnumeration* as the division of the whole into lesser parts? I am unable to believe that they have gone so utterly mad, treating the God of all like a commonality only to be perceived by the human mind and having no

58. Basil's refusal to call the Holy Spirit "God" has been labeled his "economy" or his "reserve." On this, see de Mendieta, "The Pair," 129–42.

59. For the uses of *hypostasis* see *De Sp. S.* 5, 7; 16, 38; 18, 44; 18, 45; 18, 47; 25, 59; 16, 38 (of angels); and 17, 41 (of the one God). For the theological uses of *prosôpon,* see 5, 8; 18, 45; and 30, 77.

existence in reality *(en oudemia hypostasei to einai echousan)*. They chop him up into subordinate pieces, and call this process *subnumeration!*"[60] Here *hypostasis* carries the meaning that Basil often gave it in *Against Eunomius:* it denotes a really existing thing.

Basil's use of *homotimos* and *monarchy,* when taken together with other facts, leads to the conclusion that with these words—but not only with these words—he was trying to win over those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. These are the relevant facts: (1) in *On the Holy Spirit* Basil uses none of the technical terms that the Macedonians would find offensive or controverted—*homoousios* and *homoios* (and its cognates) are conspicuously absent;[61] (2) we know from some of his letters that after Basil broke off his friendship with Eustathius of Sebaste over the divinity of the Holy Spirit, he tried to preserve his communion with those who had been friends to them both and who expressed concern or consternation at Basil's course of action;[62] (3) *homotimos* is not a controverted term, and Basil gingerly applies it to the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son; and (4) Basil uses *monarchia* only twice in all his works, and both instances are found in *On the Holy Spirit* in a context in which Basil is arguing against the Macedonians. Taken together, these yield a view of the motives behind Basil's work; he is trying to persuade the Macedonians of the Spirit's divinity.

Homotimos was used by Basil in *Against Eunomius,* and there Basil had used the word to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son and had given it no special status in his Trinitarian vocabulary. Neither in *On the Holy Spirit* does *homotimos* acquire technical status, but that is precisely why Basil can use it effectively. Were *homotimos* a technical term in the sense that *homoousios* and *homoios* (and

60. *De Sp. S.* 17, 41 (PG 32, 35D–35E); trans. Anderson, 68 (altered).

61. *Homoiotês* does appear, but not to describe the ontological relationship between the Father and the Son. Rather, Basil uses *homoiotês* to describe the action of the Son: the Son acts as the Father does. See *De Sp. S.* 8, 19; and 16, 38. Other instances of *homoiotês* (27, 66; 27, 68; and 30, 77) are not theological.

62. See, for example, Ep. 130, 224, and 226.

its cognates) had been, it would not serve Basil's purpose of disarming the Macedonians in order to win them over.[63] Even so, *homotimos* appears only four times in a theological sense in *On the Holy Spirit,* and in only two of these instances does Basil apply it to the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, when Basil applies the word to the Spirit, he does so only indirectly and by implication.[64] All human beings, Basil explains, are *homotimoi,* sharing the rank of slaves before the creator.[65] But there is no mediating rank between creator and creature, and the Spirit cannot be ranked with creatures—he is not *homotimos* with creatures.[66] This is as far as Basil goes; the reader is left to make the obvious inference that if there is no rank between creator and creature, and if the Holy Spirit cannot be ranked with the creatures, then he must be ranked with God—he must be *homotimos* with the Father and the Son. Indeed, Basil proceeds rather cautiously here.

Basil appears to use *monarchia,* too, as a concession to the Macedonians. The Macedonians subordinated the Son to the Father and the Spirit to the Son. *Monarchia* can carry these subordinationist connotations[67] and would not offend the Macedonians because it locates the unity of the Trinity in the Father as the source of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Basil insists on the equality of the *hypostaseis* while at the same time expressing their unity in terms that the Macedonians can understand: "natural goodness, inherent holiness and royal dignity reach from the Father through the Only-begotten to the Spirit."[68] In this way, the *monarchia* is not lost in the confession of *hypostaseis.*[69]

63. Even though *homotimos* lacks the technical difficulties of *homoousios,* in Ep. 52, to the Canonicae, Basil clearly uses the two words as synonyms. See Ep. 52, 2 (Courtonne, 1:135, 12–15).

64. In 372, before his break with Eustathius of Sebaste, Basil wrote Ep. 90, to the bishops of the West, and therein stated directly that the Holy Spirit is *homotimos* with the Father and the Son. See Ep. 90, 2 (Courtonne, 1:196, 22–24).

65. See *De Sp. S.* 20, 51 (PG 32, 43C).

66. See *De Sp. S.* 20, 51 (PG 32, 43D) and ibid. 19, 50 (PG 32, 42D).

67. Hanson calls Dionysius of Alexandria, who clearly subordinated the Son, a dynamic monarchian (see Hanson, *The Search,* 75). The *Patristic Greek Lexicon* has it that *monarchia* denotes "possession of but a single source, *unity* of Godhead as proceeding from Father as sole origin (in early writers esp. idea of supremacy is also present)" (877).

68. See *De Sp. S.* 18, 47 (PG 32, 39E); trans. Anderson, 75.

69. See ibid. (PG 32, 40A). Basil uses *archê* in a similar way (though not in anti-

As we saw earlier, in *Against Eunomius* transcendence and simplicity are at the heart of Basil's understanding of the one God. Basil reaffirms this transcendence and simplicity in *On the Holy Spirit* but uses it to defend himself against a new accusation, that of confessing three gods. Railing against the pneumatomachians, Basil writes: "The Unapproachable One is beyond numbers, wisest sirs; imitate the reverence shown by the Hebrews of old to the unutterable name of God. Count if you must, but do not malign the truth. Either honor him who cannot be described with your silence, or number holy things in accord with true religion."[70] Basil here insists upon the transcendence of God, which makes him in a certain sense, uncountable. If one must count, though, caution must be exercised so that the one God and Father, the one Son, and the one Holy Spirit are not made into three gods.[71] To explain how the Father and Son, as unique *hypostaseis,* are not two Gods, Basil invokes the archetype-image metaphor.[72] There are the emperor and the emperor's image but not two emperors.[73] Unlike the image of the emperor, the Son is a natural image partaking of the whole simple divine nature.[74] Thus, because the divine nature is simple, the *hypostasis* of the Father taken with the *hypostasis* of his natural image, cannot add up to two gods. In *On the Holy Spirit,* Basil clings to the theological vision that he outlined in *Against Eunomius:* the laws of arithmetic do not apply to the simple and transcendent God.

As shown earlier, in *Against Eunomius* Basil's theological vision of the divine plurality and the divine communion was informed by the biblical metaphors of archetype-image and kinship. In *On the Holy*

Macedonian, but in anti-Arian and anti-Sabellian polemic) three times in *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos:* "Now when I say 'one *ousia,*' do not imagine two divided from one, but think of the Son as existing from the *archê* of the Father. . . . There are not two gods, for there are not two fathers. He who introduces two *archai* preaches two gods. . . . For where the *archê* is one, one is that which comes from it, and where the archetype is one, so also one is the image; the ground [*logos*] of the unity is not utterly destroyed" (*Con. Sab. et Ar. et An.* 4 [605C–D]).

70. *De Sp. S.* 18, 44 (PG 32, 37E–38A); trans. Anderson, 71.

71. See ibid. (PG 32, 38A).

72. See ibid. 18, 45 (PG 32, 38B).

73. Ibid. (PG 32, 38C).

74. Ibid.

Spirit Basil incorporates the Holy Spirit into the archetype-image metaphor, thereby biblically grounding the communion of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son.[75] According to Basil, the image of God mediates to us knowledge of the archetype; but we can only fix our gaze upon the image by being joined to the Spirit of knowledge.[76] This Spirit of knowledge "gives those who love the vision of truth the power which enables them to see the image, and this power is himself."[77] Basil calls upon the support of the Scriptures for this role of the Spirit and then further explains the archetype-image-spirit of knowledge metaphor.[78] The Spirit "reveals the glory of the Only-Begotten in himself, and He gives true worshippers the knowledge of God in himself. The way to divine knowledge ascends from one Spirit through the one Son to the one Father."[79] Later in *On the Holy Spirit* Basil again writes of the Spirit in conjunction with the archetype-image metaphor but here stresses the Spirit's illuminating role. The Holy Spirit is the Light that makes visible the Image, and the Image cannot be seen without this Light.[80] Thus, in *On the Holy Spirit* Basil includes the Holy Spirit in the biblical metaphor that established the divine communion of the Father and the Son in *Against Eunomius.* In this way he brings his defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit into one of the biblical images that originally informed his vision of divine communion.

Conclusion

By the mid-370s Basil has finished constructing a major part of his synthesis of Greek thought and Scriptural truth. He has borrowed what

75. For obvious reasons, the kinship metaphor is limited to the Father and the Son, though Basil uses a different biblical image to describe the procession of the Holy Spirit—the Holy Spirit proceeds from the mouth of the Father. See, for example, ibid. 18, 46.

76. See ibid. 18, 47 (PG 32, 39D).

77. Ibid. (PG 32, 39D); trans. Anderson, 74.

78. See 1 Cor 12:3; Jn 4:24; Ps 36:9; and Jn 1:9.

79. *De Sp. S.* 18, 47 (PG 32, 39E); trans. Anderson, 74.

80. Ibid. 26, 64 (PG 32, 54A–B). Actually in the earlier passage on archetype-image-spirit of knowledge (18, 47), Basil cites a scriptural passage in which the Holy Spirit is called light, but here he dwells on the light metaphor.

struck him as true from his Greek philosophical heritage and used the subtlety and sophistication of his own language to probe the depth of Christian mysteries that Greek thought could not have imagined. This synthesis has two salient features: a lasting theological vision and a flexible yet precise set of nonbiblical technical terms that guard biblical truth.

Because of his synthesis, Basil is often credited with having enshrined a Trinitarian formula that would be the hallmark of orthodoxy for Greek speakers for ages to come, but his accomplishment is more complicated than that. Certainly there is some truth to such a description of Basil's work. He did work out a distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* that would serve as the foundation of later orthodoxy. It can even be said that Basil is ultimately responsible for the formula, one *ousia* three *hypostaseis,* although Basil never used the phrase as such. Nevertheless, Basil's theological vocabulary is far more flexible than the formulae that developed from his thought. In his earliest works, he hesitated to use *homoousios* though he later came to prefer it to *homoios* and its cognates. Even in the mid-370s, however, he used *homoiotês* of the Father and the Son. For him, *homoousios* became the best word to express the relationship between the Father and the Son but never the only word. Basil had not reached the point where proper understanding of God could be expressed only by certain words: in *On the Holy Spirit* Basil clearly teaches the divinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit without once using either *homoousios* or *homoios kat' ousian.* Basil's use of *prosôpon* and *hypostasis* also prevents us from considering Basil's thought inflexible. In polemic with the Sabellians and with the Paulinians, Basil insists that *prosôpon* must be used only with *hypostasis* so as to avoid an errant understanding of divine unity and plurality. But in polemic with the Eunomians and the Macedonians, whom he does not suspect of Sabellianism, Basil himself uses *prosôpon* without *hypostasis* to express the divine plurality. Understanding the historical development of Basil's thought makes it evident that, although he clearly comes to judge some Trinitarian words better than others, his Trinitarian terms are not enshrined in formulae.

This flexibility of expression, however, does not imply a lack of coherence in Basil's thought, for early in his career Basil articulated a theological vision to which he remained faithful. He held steadfastly to his belief in a simple, transcendent, almighty, and undefinable God. Basil is by no means novel in this. The theologians of his time and many before him realized that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had much in common with the God of classical theism.

Basil's combination of Greek thought and biblical truth makes many anxious, for they wonder whether he is more Greek than Christian, more philosopher than theologian. While Basil's thought cannot but be thoroughly Greek, he is by no means simply a philosopher in Christian dress. He was not a philosopher in his own right as was Marius Victorinus or Augustine or, perhaps, Eusebius of Caesarea, and it was not philosophical considerations that spurred the forward progress of his theology. Basil concern was to defend intelligently his beliefs against heretics like Eunomius and, as we shall see in the next chapter, to edify the Church; he gladly employed his philosophical learning to accomplish these ends.

Moreover, the historical evolution of Basil's thought and the role of polemic in the maturation of his Trinitarian terminology relativizes, to a certain extent, the quest for philosophical sources. A series of events led Basil to reconsider his preference of *homoios* and its cognates to *homoousios:* the Eunomians had abused *homoios* in such a way that it conveyed, at one and the same time, *no* theological meaning and *any* theological meaning; Basil's exchange with Apollinaris helped him to rid *homoousios* of materialistic connotations. The same point is seen in the emergence of *hypostasis* as a term suitable to express the divine plurality: it is less significant to Basil's theology that a particular philosophical school employed *hypostasis* as a technical term and far more important that he engaged with other theologians over the meaning of the term. Thus, Basil's encounters with his contemporaries shaped his choice of Trinitarian words just as much or more than his eclectic borrowing from Greek philosophy.

Some accounts of Basil's theological accomplishment, or as I have

been calling it, his synthesis of Greek learning and Christian truth, would end here, with his explanation of Trinitarian words. But that is to truncate Basil's achievement. Theological vision and Trinitarian terminology form the edifice of Basil's synthesis of Greek and Christian thought; his way of interpreting the Scriptures, however, serves as the foundation of this edifice. He had to read and interpret the Scriptures before using technical language to explicate their teaching. But, of course, Basil read and interpreted the Scriptures as a classically trained, fourth-century Greek speaker. The implications of this must be unfolded. Before we turn to the role of the Scriptures in his Trinitarian thought, we would do well to explain his general approach to the Scriptures. How did he read them? How did he conceive their inspiration? How did he handle variant readings and textual issues? Was he a literalist or an allegorist? Erudition does not always make a good preacher. How was Basil in the pulpit?

CHAPTER 4

Basil and the Scriptures

Basil's exegesis forms an important part of his Christian synthesis, and we should look at his general view of the Scriptures before turning in the next chapters to his Trinitarian exegesis.

In the preface to his translation of Origen's homilies on Luke, Jerome derides Ambrose's dependence upon other authors and refers to him as an ominous cawing crow who "gleams with the colored feathers of all the birds, although the bird itself is black as night."[1] Basil was one of those colorful birds. Ambrose's borrowing from Basil—or plagiarism as Jerome would have it—testifies to an important fact that is often overlooked: Basil deserves to be treated as an exegete in his own right. This oversight is understandable when one considers who has received most of the attention: Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine, not to mention Basil's own brother, Gregory. Moreover, Basil did not produce a vast corpus of sermons and commentaries. In point of fact, he wrote no commentaries and few sermons, compared to other Fathers.[2] In addition to quite a few letters and his dogmatic writings, Basil has left us only

1. Origen, *Homilies on Luke,* Preface; FC 94:4.

2. The commentary on Isaiah is dubious. See Tieck, "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 134–37; and *Clavis Patrum Graecorum,* vol. 2:166, §2911.

the celebrated *Hexaemeron,* thirteen homilies on the Psalms, and some twenty-five other homilies on various topics and scriptural passages.[3] Ambrose used Basil's *Hexaemeron* not because of the great quantity of his works but because of their quality, which was also noticed by Jerome and Rufinus of Aquileia.

To consider Basil's view of the Scriptures is to treat a number of disparate themes: his way of reading texts; his understanding of inspiration and the Bible; his appropriation of science and philosophy; his spiritual interpretation; his preaching; and his integration of Scripture and tradition.

How does Basil approach the Scriptures so as to discern the truth of its teaching? This question has already been partly answered: Basil approached the Scriptures with certain metaphysical assumptions about God and his attributes. But there remains much more to say about Basil's scriptural exegesis. More than metaphysical presuppositions account for his reading of the Scriptures and the doctrine that he extracts from them. Ancient *paideia* has a role here too.

Ancient Reading

The reading of a text in the ancient world differed greatly from modern practice, and ancient education formed the context in which Basil read and interpreted the Bible. In the simple act of reading, never mind the subtleties of scriptural exegesis, he would have had to employ a set of quite complex skills. First, Basil would have had to take on the tasks of the *grammaticus:* establishing and construing the text. The text itself had to be established *(diorthôsis),* for there were no divisions of words. Consider, for example, Mark 10:40, part of Jesus' response to James and John, the sons of thunder, after they had asked to sit at his right and left in glory. The end of the verse would have looked something like this in the uncial manuscripts: ΑΛΛΟΙΣΗΤΟΙΜΑΧΤΑΙ. The reader would have had to divide this series of letters, and there are two reasonable possibilities. If it is divided so as to read

3. I have left aside here Basil's ascetic corpus.

ΑΛΛ ΟΙΣ ΗΤΟΙΜΑΣΤΑΙ, (ἀλλ᾽ οἷς ἡτοίμασται),

then Jesus would have told the sons of Zebedee, "To sit at my right or my left is not mine to grant, but it is *for those for whom* it has been prepared." But if the letters are divided to read

ΑΛΛΟΙΣ ΗΤΟΙΜΑΣΤΑΙ (ἄλλοις ἡτοίμασται),

then Jesus responds quite differently to James and John saying, "To sit at my right or my left is not mine to grant; it has been prepared *for others.*" In one case, he does not answer their question; in the other, he denies their request. The text did not always bear such divergent meanings, but mentally dividing one word from another (and thereby interpreting the text) was part of the task of reading in ancient times.[4]

The second task of the *grammaticus* was the proper construal *(anagnôsis)* of the text, for there were no divisions of phrases and sentences by punctuation.[5] Kurt and Barbara Aland give the humorous example of a German nursery saying whose meaning would vary greatly with different punctuation. Punctuated one way it would read: "I have ten fingers on each hand, five and twenty on my hands and feet." The proper punctuation is, naturally, "I have ten fingers; on each hand five, and twenty on my hands and feet."[6] The construal of a text could have theological ramifications. John 1:3–4, for example, reads without punctuation:

> All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men.

There are two traditional ways of punctuating the text. First, it could read thus:

4. See Matthew 9:18 for another example. ΕΙΣΕΛΘΩΝ reads either as εἰς ἐλθών or as εἰσελθών.

5. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 77. On this point see also Gögler, *Zur Theologie des biblischen Wortes,* and Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe,* a study of Origen's exegetical method.

6. See Aland, *The Text of the New Testament,* 282.

> All things were made through him and without him nothing was made. That (which) was made in him was life, and the life was the light of men.

This reading gives the verses a possible "Arian" connotation. That life came to be in the Word means that he came to be alive and was thus created. But the "Arian" meaning of the text falls away if it is punctuated to read:

> All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

By this reading the "Arians" are refuted rather than confirmed.[7]

Augustine, for example, considers different ways of construing Romans 9, on the election of Jacob and the rejection of Esau. The saint wrestles with this text, proposing and rejecting all sorts of interpretations so as to avoid the unpalatable reading that he eventually adopts: i.e., that Esau merited God's hatred in the womb, not because of any foreseen demerits or because of any rejection of divine grace. Augustine tried a different construal of Romans 9:10–13[8] so as to resist the conclusion that Esau is hated and damned simply because God by some hidden equity does not elect him. "Perhaps we should connect," writes Augustine, "the words 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand' with what precedes rather than with what follows."[9] Thus, there would be no election where there are no works, and God does not appear capricious and arbitrary. Augustine, in the end, rejects the alternative construal, for it would make justification precede election rather than election, justification. Fathers like Augustine and Basil do not very often consider different ways of construing a text (I offer an example of Basil practicing this skill below), and

7. See de la Potterie, "De interpunctione," 193–208.

8. "And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she was told, 'The elder will serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"

9. *Augustine, Ad Simplicianum* 1, 2, 6; trans. Burleigh, 390.

this should be expected, for most of the time there is one obviously correct construal and rarely two or more plausible ones. Indeed, how difficult the Scriptures would be to understand if it were regularly unclear where one sentence began and another ended.

Another skill that had to be learned was what we may call linguistic analysis, what they called *to methodikon.* In such an analysis, "foreign words would be explained, metaphor and archaisms elucidated. Thus, in the first place, reading a classic in school meant analysing its sentences into parts of speech and its verses into metre, noting linguistic usage and style, discussing different meanings of words, elucidating figures of speech or ornamental devices," and tracing etymologies.[10] Origen, for example, explains what it means when, at the time of his passion, the Lord sent two of his disciples to retrieve the foal of an ass near Bethphage and Bethany (Lk 19:29). "'Bethany,'" he writes, "means 'house of obedience,' and 'Bethphage' 'house of jaws'—that is, a priestly place. For jaw-bones were given to priests, as the Law commands."[11] So, Origen concludes: "The Savior sends his disciples to the place where 'obedience' is, where 'the place given over to priests' is, to unbind 'the foal of an ass, on which no man had ever sat.'"[12] John Chrysostom, the greatest exegete of the Antiochene school, engages in a similar practice in his homily on John 3:35–4:12. Chrysostom explains why the evangelist describes Samaria as the city "called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph" (Jn 4:5). The reader needs to know this information so that he can follow the story later. Chrysostom then goes on to recount the origin of the Samaritans, again, so that his audience will not miss the significance of the text.[13]

Basil, preaching on Psalm 44:2–3,[14] notes that the sacred author has used apostrophe. In verse 2—"I speak my works to the king"—he speaks of the king, but in verse 3—"Thou art ripe in beauty, above the

10. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 78.
11. Origen, *Homilies on Luke,* Hom. 37; FC 94:153.
12. Ibid.
13. Chrysostom, *Homilies on John,* Hom. 31; FC33:300–3.
14. All quotations from the Psalms accord with the numbering of the Septuagint.

sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips"—of the Lord Jesus. No indication is given of this change; rather the reader must discern that the author has employed a rhetorical figure. As Basil says, "it seemed best to us to interpret the next expression as beginning with itself and not to join it with the preceding, but to associate it with what follows. For the words 'Thou art ripe in beauty' we think are spoken to the Lord by way of apostrophe."[15] Here the presence of a rhetorical figure affects the construal of the text.

Etymologies also interested Basil. Explaining Genesis 1:8—"And God called the firmament Heaven"—he writes that "the visible region is called the heavens [*ouranos*] due to the density and continuity of the air which clearly comes within our vision and which has a claim to the name of heaven from the word 'seen' [*horaô*]."[16] It turns out that Basil is wrong—*ouranos* is not derived from a form of *horaô*—but that is irrelevant; interpreting the biblical text requires the exegete to fuss about words, sometimes reporting—or inventing—etymologies.[17]

Finally, the analysis of a text "involved the investigation of the 'story' presented in the text being studied," *to historikon.*[18] Relating the *historia* concerning a text gave a narrative context that was necessary for understanding the point being made. When John Chrysostom explains the presence of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration, he reminds the reader of certain facts that make their significance patent. First, Jesus had been confused by the multitudes with Elijah and the prophets of old. The presence of all three at the Transfiguration makes clear the difference between "the servants and the Lord."[19] John also mentions that Jesus had been accused of breaking the Law and making himself equal to God. The presence of Moses and Elijah clears Jesus of these charges, for Moses, who gave the Law, would not have

15. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 44, 3 (PG 29, 396B); FC 46:282.

16. *Hex.* 3, 8 (PG 29, 72B); FC 46:49–50.

17. See the entry for *ouranos* in Liddell and Scott. Aristotle (*de Mundo,* 400a.7) held the word to be from *horos* (boundary) and *anô* (above); see also Plato, *Cratylus,* 396c.

18. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 80.

19. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew,* Hom. 56, 3; NPNF 1, 10:346.

stood with a transgressor, or Elijah, who "was jealous for the glory of God" with a blasphemer. The task of interpretation for Chrysostom, then, involved relating what the reader must have in mind in order to understand a given text.

But Origen did the same: he explains how one ought to think of Moses and Elijah so as to understand their significance at the Transfiguration of Jesus. Origen points out that the garments of Jesus becoming as white as light is the key to discerning the meaning of the story. To see Jesus with his face shining like the sun and his clothing as white as light is to behold him as he truly is, the glorious Son of God. This part of the story makes sense, for Origen, of the glorification of Moses and Elijah. To see Moses and Elijah thus glorified is to have insight into the true spiritual meaning of the Law and the Prophets. "If anyone," writes Origen, "sees the glory of Moses, having understood the spiritual law as a discourse in harmony with Jesus, and the wisdom in the prophets which is hidden in a mystery, he sees Moses and Elijah in glory when he sees them with Jesus."[20] Origen's interpretation of the Transfiguration differs greatly from Chrysostom's especially in that he, as usual, is less bound to the literal sense. Nonetheless, the task of interpretation requires both literal and figurative explanation in order to make clear how the larger narrative illuminates a particular text.

Psalm 44:2 reads, "My heart hath uttered a good word," and Basil interprets it by recourse to the wider context of the Psalm as a whole. He openly breaks with an exegetical tradition that referred these words to the person of the Father. Who could deny that the Father utters a good Word? But Basil notes that the context demands a different interpretation. "It seems to me," he writes, "that these words refer to the person of the prophet, since what follows the saying no longer makes the explanation concerning the Father equally smooth for us."[21] The Father could not utter the next verse: "My tongue is the pen of a scrivener that writeth swiftly." The context is crucial.

20. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 12, 38; ANF 9:470.
21. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 44, 3 (PG 29, 393A); FC 46:280.

Basil does something similar in his homily on the creation of the "lights in the firmament," the sun and the moon (Gn 1:14–15). They were created on the fourth day, but Basil feels compelled to recapitulate for his audience what God had done on the first three days of creation. Without this narrative context, it is clear that the significance of the creation of the "lights" on the fourth day would be lost. "The heavens and the earth had come first," writes Basil, and "after them, light had been created, day and night separated, and in turn, the firmament and dry land revealed."[22] The waters were gathered, the earth made fruitful. "However, the sun did not yet exist, nor the moon, lest men might call the sun the first cause and father of light, and lest they who are ignorant of God might deem it the producer of what grows from the earth."[23] In order to make his point about the creation of the sun, viz., that it is not to be confused with the creator, Basil must mention what God has already done. What better way to check humanity's idolatrous devotion to the sun than to create light and plants before it?

Inspiration and the Biblical Text

2 Timothy 3:16 says that the Scriptures are inspired *(theopneustos),* and, naturally, the Fathers agreed.[24] Their teaching on inspiration, however, was not monolithic or narrowly or technically understood. Conciliar decisions and even other nonscriptural writings could be "inspired." Moreover, the term inspiration need not name specifically the divine influence upon the sacred author; it may designate, as well, the doctrine of the Scriptures. Origen admitted even degrees of inspiration in the biblical text.[25]

Basil, of course, shares the view of the ancient Church that the Scriptures are inspired by God, and he thinks of inspiration as pri-

22. *Hex.* 6, 2 (PG 29, 120C); FC 46:85.
23. Ibid.
24. See *Patristic Greek Lexicon, theopneustos.*
25. See Origen, *Commentary on John* 1, 5.

marily prophetic and oracular. David and Moses are,[26] then, above all prophets, moved not so much by the Logos as one can find in Origen, but by the Spirit. Citing Scripture against Eunomius, Basil wrote, "We are going to give you the very words of the Holy Spirit."[27] The prophets, he says in his homilies on the Psalms, are flutes. "The flute is a musical instrument which needs wind for the melody. Wherefore, I think that every holy prophet was called figuratively a flute because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."[28] The sacred authors bring forth words not of human but of divine invention. Basil speaks for the prophet saying, "the things that I teach from the Spirit, these I proclaim to you, saying nothing of my own, nothing human; but . . . I have been hearkening to the propositions of the Spirit, who hands down in mystery to us the wisdom of God."[29]

If the sacred author is a flute, then there is not a single note out of tune. The Holy Spirit is not careless or sloppy. Every word has its rightful place, and Basil draws attention to this fact in a few sermons. "Notice the exactness of the wording,"[30] he says in expounding Psalm 1 and "admire the precision of each word," in a sermon on John 1:1.[31] In the sixth sermon of the *Hexaemeron* Basil goes on for some time about the great size of the sun and moon. He explains that he has "mentioned these things as a demonstration of the great size of the luminaries and as a proof that none of the divinely inspired words, even as much as a syllable, is an idle word."[32] Indeed, "to say there is an idle word in Scripture is a terrible blasphemy."[33] As William Tieck points out, for Basil even the silence of the Scriptures is instructive, for Mo-

26. David is constantly called a prophet in Homilies 10–22; Basil calls Moses a prophet in *Hex.* 2, 4.

27. *Con. Eun.* 2, 17 (SC 305:66, 21–22), cited in Tieck, "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 101.

28. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 29, 7 (PG 29, 321B); FC 46:224.

29. Ibid. 48, 2 (PG 29, 436C); FC 46:314–15.

30. Ibid. 1, 3 (PG 29, 217A); FC 46:156.

31. *Hom.* 16, 4 (PG 31, 480B); my trans.

32. *Hex.* 6, 11 (PG 29, 144D); FC 46:101.

33. Ibid. 10, 15 (SC 160:206, 13–14); trans. Harrison, 43. The authenticity of *Hexaemeron* 10 and 11 is uncertain, although, Alexis Smets and Michel van Esbroeck argue that the homilies belong at least in "l'héritage de saint Basile" ("Introduction," SC 160:17).

ses "left unsaid, as useless for us, things in no way pertaining to us."[34]

Basil often applies this principle without praising the Spirit for his diction, and his belief in the exactness of inspiration corresponds to his tendency to explain the Scriptures word by word. He explains why Genesis 1:5 reads, "and there was evening and there was morning, one day" instead of "first day" as one might expect.[35] He often reads very much into the customary parallelism of the Psalms. He explains the difference between "saved" and "delivered" (Ps 7:2),[36] "made" and "created" (Ps 32:9),[37] "ripeness" and "beauty" (Ps 44:4),[38] and "sought" and "ask" (Ps 33:5).[39] In the title of Psalm 44, the Holy Spirit had inspired the psalmist to use the future tense rather than the present, and this makes Basil think of the resurrection.[40] Indeed, one could not read very far at all into Basil's exegetical sermons without coming upon an explanation of the meaning of the Spirit's use of a single word.

In Basil's view, if the prophet requires the presence of the Spirit in order to speak the word of God, then the reader does so, as well, in order to understand the word of God. Sometimes Basil sounds much like the allegorists when he insists upon the conditions for the right interpretation of Scripture. The Scriptures are not written for all but only for those "who have ears according to the inner man."[41] Meditation yields the hidden meaning of the Scriptures, for "it is not the privilege of any chance person to gaze at the divine mysteries, but of him alone who is able to be a harmonious instrument of the promise, so that his soul is moved by the action of the Holy Spirit in it instead of by the psaltery."[42] Even when Basil takes a more literal than allegorical reading of the text, he requires much of the reader, who must be free of passion, unburdened by life's cares, industrious, and inquisitive.[43] While the Scriptures presuppose curiosity, they also pro-

34. *Hex.* 9, 1 (PG 29, 189A); FC 46:136. See Tieck, "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 93.
35. See *Hex.* 2, 8.
36. See *Hom. sup. Pss.* 7, 2.
37. See ibid. 32, 6.
38. See ibid. 44, 5.
39. See ibid. 33, 3.
40. See ibid. 44, 2.
41. Ibid. (PG 29, 389B); FC 46:277.
42. Ibid. 45, 1 (PG 29, 416C); FC 46:297–98; see also Ep. 204, 5.
43. See *Hex.* 1, 1.

duce it. God has made Scripture purposefully obscure, not because he "begrudges us the knowledge," but to kindle our desire for the mysteries there hidden; moreover, we cherish what we have gotten by much labor while despising what comes easily.[44] The understanding of these obscure passages comes not only by means of our labor but also by means of the Holy Spirit, for "the Spirit writes thoughts in us," albeit "in proportion to the size of the heart." He writes upon the heart "either things evident to all or things more obscure, according to its previous preparation of purity."[45]

Given his prophetic view of inspiration and his concern for the exacting wording of the Scriptures, one might guess that Basil would have an interest in textual criticism, in establishing just which reading of a text is the right one, the divine one. Somewhat surprisingly, when Basil is given two (sometimes wildly) different translations of the Hebrew text, he will take both of them rather than one or the other. He notes, for example, that there are various translations for Psalm 59:10: "Moab is the pot of my hope" or "a pot for washing" or "a pot of security."[46] The Moabite, a heathen, hopes to enter the Church, and he does so through baptism, the "pot for washing," which grants remission of sin and produces security.[47] Or again, Basil has access to two different copies of Psalm 32:7—"Gathering together the waters of the sea, *as a vessel*" and "Gathering together *as in a vessel* the waters of the sea." The former reading he takes to describe the sea as it naturally swells and shrinks while the latter reading "refers us to ancient history, when the Red Sea, although no one was dividing it nor enclosing it, of itself stood firm, as if held in some vessel."[48]

When Basil finds a shorter and a longer version of the same text, he

44. Ibid. 3, 2 (PG 29, 56B); FC 46:39. See also ibid. 8, 8 (PG 29, 184C; FC 46:132): "The words of Scripture, if simply read, are a few short syllables . . . ; but when the meaning in the words is explained, then the great marvel of the wisdom of the Creator appears."

45. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 44, 3 (PG 29, 396A); FC 46:281–82.

46. Ibid. 59, 4 (PG 29, 468A); FC 46:339.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid. 32, 5 (PG 29, 336A); FC 46:235–36. For similar interpretations, see also ibid. 44, 2; ibid. 44, 4; and ibid. 48, 1.

most often is not curious as to which is authentic. He simply offers an interpretation of the additional words in the longer version and does not seem to think of the possibility that they may be an interpolation. Basil's rejection of a variant reading in Genesis 1:10 is the exception that proves the rule.[49] Explaining Psalm 28, Basil notes that he has found in many copies the added words, "Bring to the Lord, O ye children of God."[50] He judges the addition to be most appropriate, not on textual grounds, but because of its meaning: only the children of God, those who are holy and worthy to call God Father, should bring an offering to him.[51]

Basil does not always place two different texts or translations on equal footing. Genesis 1:2, for example, tells us that the spirit of God was "stirring above the waters," as in the Septuagint, or "warmed with fostering care," as in the Syrian translation of the Hebrew, which, Basil notes, is a closer translation.[52] On the Septuagint reading, "spirit" can be "the diffusion of air, understanding that the author is enumerating to you the parts of the world."[53] On the Syrian reading, "Spirit" is the Creator. Basil offers the interpretation of an unnamed Syrian, that the Holy Spirit "endued the nature of the waters with life through his [the Syrian's] comparison with a bird brooding upon eggs and imparting some vital power to them as they are being warmed."[54] Basil does not reject the creaturely reading of "spirit" altogether but says that the divine reading, as it were, is "truer and approved by those before us."[55]

In sum, Basil's approach to Scripture is that of a pastor who believes it to be the Word of God rather than that of a scholar interested in sorting through textual problems. It was not, of course, the case in

49. See *Hex.* 4, 5 (PG 29, 88D–89A); FC 46: 62: "'And so it was' [Gn 1:10]. This introduction is sufficient to show that the voice of the Creator passed into action. But, in many copies there is added, 'And the waters below the heavens were gathered into their places, and the dry land appeared,' words which, indeed, some of the rest of the interpreters have not given, and which the usage of the Hebrews does not appear to retain." The added words, Basil tells us, are superfluous and marked with an obelus.

50. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 28, 1 (PG 29, 281C); FC 46:194.

51. See ibid.

52. *Hex.* 2, 6 (PG 29, 44B); FC 46:30–31.

53. Ibid. (PG 29, 44A); FC 46:30.

54. Ibid. (PG 29, 44B); FC 46:31.

55. Ibid. (PG 29, 44A); FC 46:30.

the ancient Church that a Father had to be one or the other, believing pastor or textual scholar: Origen and Jerome prove as much, though the label "textual scholar" hardly does them justice. Basil's great learning, evident throughout his sermons, did not give him quite the interests of Origen. While Basil was interested in variant readings he was not interested in textual criticism; he would never have compiled the *Hexapla,* though he would have used it, and perhaps did. Variant readings often provoked, for him, spiritual insights into the meaning of the text, but not all readings were equally acceptable. He even once rejected a reading as spurious.

Science and Philosophy

Especially in the *Hexaemeron,* but also in his other sermons, Basil displays a vast knowledge of ancient natural science and of the behavior and character of all sorts of plants and animals. He is quite familiar with the positions of different natural philosophers and current with the disputed questions of natural science. He shows that he has, at the least, very good secondhand knowledge of Aristotle's *On the Heavens, On the Soul, Metaphysics, Meteorology, History of Animals,* and *On the Parts of Animals;* of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Republic;* of Theophrastus' *Enquiry into Plants;* of Hippocrates' *Aphorisms;* of Aratus' *Phenomena;* of Strabo's *Geography;* of Aelian's *On the Nature of Animals;* of Empedocles' theory of reincarnation; and of Herodotus' *History.* Basil uses what he has learned from pagans to show his audience both the folly of human wisdom and the sagacity of the Scriptures. He uses his knowledge of natural science both to praise God and to put reason in its proper place. After offering a number of different explanations of how the four elements make up the earth, Basil tells his flock: "should any of these things which have been said seem to you to be plausible, transfer your admiration to the wisdom of God which has ordered them so. . . . If . . . not, still let the simplicity of faith be stronger than the deductions of reason."[56]

56. *Hex.* 1, 10 (PG 29, 25A); FC 46:17.

One acute difficulty arises in the study of Basil's use of Greek philosophy: it is impossible to tell just how familiar he was with the actual works of the great Greek thinkers. Though often times it is clear enough that he had recourse to primary sources, we cannot deduce from his familiarity with certain Greek ideas that he had closely read and studied the primary sources in which these ideas were articulated. For, as we have, the ancients had handbooks by which students could study the thought of the philosophers.[57] This means more than that some of Basil's knowledge would be secondhand. Much of *Hexaemeron* 7 and 8, for example, draws on an epitome of Aristotle, but John Rist points out that "this epitome does not reproduce Aristotle particularly faithfully; in it traces of Aelian, Oppian, Theophrastus and others may be detected."[58] We need not be disappointed in Basil for using manuals, but his use of them makes more difficult an analysis of his appropriation of Greek thought. It confirms the fact—otherwise demonstrable—that Basil was not a Stoic, an Aristotelian, a Middle Platonist, or a Neoplatonist, pure and simple; rather, his education included them all.

Many scholars have done the onerous work of tracing the precise philosophical sources of Basil's sermons, especially the *Hexaemeron.* The *Hexaemeron* and Plato's *Timaeus* share a number of themes, e.g., that time was made with the universe,[59] that the elements are proportioned and held together in a bond of friendship,[60] and that there are two kinds of fire.[61] Basil shows himself familiar with Aristotle's theory of the interaction of elements,[62] as well as with his theory of a fifth element.[63] The *Hexaemeron* also reflects some Stoic thought: "the notion that the commands of God create the nature of things and that these divine commands remain in nature and, for example, cause the earth to continue to bear fruits."[64] Basil, like the Stoics, thought the

57. See Plato, *Laws* 7 (811A) and Chadwick, "Florilegium," 1131–60.
58. Rist, "Basil's 'Neo-Platonism,'" 205.
59. *Timaeus* 37C–39E; *Hex.* 1, 5.
60. *Timaeus* 31C and 32C; *Hex.* 2, 2.
61. *Timaeus* 45B and 58C; *Hex.* 6, 3.
62. Aristotle, *De generatione et corruptione* 2, 4; and *Hex.* 4, 5.
63. See *Hex.* 1, 11.
64. Robbins, "Hexaemeral Literature," 17. See Diogenes Laertius 7, 156; *Hex.* 5, 1; and *Hex.* 9, 2.

world perishable because its parts are destructible.[65] These and other instances are known to us by the work of Stanislas Giet improving upon the work of Y. Courtonne[66] and J. Levie[67] who themselves advanced the studies of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars like M. Berger,[68] E. Fialon,[69] Theodore Leslie Shear,[70] and Frank Robbins.[71] There is no need to repeat details of their work here where we are interested primarily in the *use* that Basil made of philosophical knowledge as an exegete and preacher.

In his first homily on the *Hexaemeron,* Basil shows that he is familiar with the various theories about the constitution of the earth and the heavens.[72] After rejecting the godless atomic cosmogony of Leucippus and Democritus and Plotinus' eternal world, he urges his congregation not to puzzle over contradictory theories, for it will make their minds "dizzy, with the reasoning going on to no definite end."[73] There is no point in entertaining questions that cannot possibly be answered and that do not serve the edification of the Church. Rather than idly chattering about these theories, we should turn our attention to the truly important point: God created the heavens and the earth. Basil exhorts his people: "Let us glorify the Master Craftsman for all that has been done wisely and skillfully; and from the beauty of the visible things let us form an idea of Him who is more than beautiful; and from the greatness of these perceptible and circumscribed bodies let us conceive of Him who is infinite and immense and who surpasses all understanding in the plenitude of his power."[74] Basil makes this same point in other ways. He tries, for example, to enumerate the many genera and species of fish to show that such a thing is, in fact, impossible. He goes on about mussels, scallops, sea snails, lampreys, eels, sharks, dogfish, and the like only to ask, "who of those who have grown old

65. See Diogenes Laertius 7, 141; and *Hex.* 1, 3.
66. Courtonne, *Saint Basile et l'Hellénisme.*
67. Levie, "Les sources," 113–49.
68. Berger, *Die Schöpfungslehre.*
69. Fialon, *Étude historique.*
70. Shear, *The Influence of Plato.*
71. Robbins, "Hexaemeral Literature."
72. See also *Hex.* 3, 3.
73. Ibid. 1, 8 (PG 29, 21B); FC 46:14.
74. Ibid. 11 (PG 29, 28B); FC 46:19.

around the shores and beaches is able to acquaint us accurately with the history of all fishes?"[75] The answer, of course, is no one.

Natural science becomes more directly relevant to the Christian life when Basil speaks of the behavior of animals who serve in some measure as models to be imitated or examples to be avoided. We should not, for example, follow the crab that inventively feasts on the flesh of the oyster by inserting a pebble in its valves to prevent it from closing and defending itself.[76] We should shun the fickle and inconstant octopus that assumes the color of the rock to which it is fastened[77] but imitate the bees' sense of communal order and common good. Basil describes the virtues of different kinds of birds and calls for emulation: the social responsibility of cranes, the military service and maternal love of crows, the solicitude for the aged of storks, the inventiveness and spousal fidelity of the swallow, and the faithful trust in providence of the halcyon.[78] The behavior of animals—and many more examples could be cited—is designed by God to instruct human beings in the way of virtue and to awe them with divine wisdom. "Does not the gratitude of the dog put to shame any man who is ungrateful to his benefactors?" Basil asks. "In fact, many dogs are said to have died beside their masters, murdered in a lonely place. In the case of [a] recent murder some dogs have actually become guides for those seeking the murderer and have caused the evildoer to be brought to justice." The virtue of the dog convicts the vicious person. "What can they say," Basil asks, "who not only fail to love the Lord who created and nourishes them, but even treat as friends men who use offensive language against God, share the same table with them, and even at the meal itself permit blasphemies against Him who provides for them."[79]

Basil not only pressed his fourth-century knowledge of the plant and animal kingdom into the service of religion, but also used Greek

75. Ibid. 7, 2 (PG 29, 152B); FC 46:108.
76. See ibid. 3.
77. See ibid.
78. See ibid. 8, 5–6.
79. Ibid. 9, 4 (PG 29, 197D–200A); FC 46:143.

ethics to illumine the moral life. Basil's appropriation of the Greek ideal of philanthropy, as analyzed by Brian Daley, is a striking example.[80] Daley examines the sermons that Basil preached in his efforts to build a Christian social network especially in response to the famine of 369.[81] He sees here Basil's response to the challenge "to take hold of the classical tradition . . . with full authority, and to shape it to the needs of the Christian faith: to retain all its techniques of analysis and embellishment and persuasion, even to retain what one could of its understanding of the world, the human person, and the divine realm, while replacing its mythic repertoire with the persons and events of the biblical narrative and centering the hope which underlay practical engagement with the world's needs on final salvation through Christ, the Word made flesh."[82]

Philanthropy, Daley points out, was expected by the Greeks from gods and kings, but Julian the Apostate insisted upon this pagan virtue with a new force, connecting "active, socially radical concern for humanity and all serious religious observance."[83] "You must," Julian wrote to a pagan priest, "above all exercise philanthropy, for from it result many other blessings, and moreover the choicest and greatest of blessing of all, the good will of the gods. For . . . we must suppose that God, who naturally loves human beings, has more kindness for those people who love their fellows."[84] Julian himself recognized that the Christians lived this pagan ideal better than the pagans themselves. The Christians, of course, did not live philanthropy as a pagan virtue but as a Christian one, and classically educated Greek Christians like Basil were able to assimilate this part of *paideia,* this aspect of their cultural and philosophical inheritance, into the Christian life.

In his homilies on wealth and greed, preached during the famine of 369, Basil consciously transforms pagan philanthropy into a Christian

80. Daley, "Building a New City," 431–61.

81. On these sermons see also Sheather, "Pronouncements of the Cappadocians," 230–39 and Meredith, "The Three Cappadocians on Beneficence," 89–104.

82. Daley, "Building a New City," 433–44.

83. Ibid., 436.

84. Julian, Fragment of *Letter to a Priest* 289 AB; trans. Wright, 436.

virtue. That is not to say, obviously, that pagans would have introduced Christians to love of the poor and to acts of charity toward those in need. It is to say, rather, that Basil was able to synthesize part of classical culture with Christianity, and in turn to express this Christian virtue in terms accessible to those who shared that culture. In Homily 6, he urges his congregation to deeds of honor, which is not exclusively Christian, but he sets this love of honor in "a new imaginative context: the greatest honor a grain owner can ambition is to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, surrounded by the angels and saints, and there be called 'nurturer' and 'benefactor' and 'all the other titles of philanthropy' by the people one has helped."[85] Basil makes a similar point in Homily 8:

> We should be put to shame by what is said about the philanthropy of the Greeks: among some of them philanthropic law decrees a single table, and a common meal, and they have formed what amounts to a single household for a large population. Let us abandon the outsiders, though, and turn to the example of the three thousand [in the early Christian community of Acts 2]; let us imitate the first band of Christians, when all things were held in common—when life and soul and harmony and the table all were shared, when fraternity was undivided, and unfeigned love formed many bodies into one.[86]

Daley nicely sums up his view of Basil's three sermons on greed and wealth. "One can detect in them, taken together, hints of a larger scheme for the Christian, philosophical reshaping of his city: hints of an ideal of human society and of the dignity of the human person that had deep, if somewhat slender roots in Hellenic philosophy, but that found new motivation and explanation in the Christian Gospels."[87]

Basil also Christianizes the idea that virtue comes only with freedom from passion, which the Stoics emphasized more than the Platonists. "The soul of the just man," he says, "severing itself from affection for the body, has its life hidden with Christ in God, so that it can

85. Daley, "Building a New City," 443, citing Hom. 6, 3.
86. Ibid., 447, citing Hom. 8, 8.
87. Ibid., 448.

say like the Apostle, 'It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live in faith' [Gal 2:20]."[88] As with the Stoics and many other Greeks, for Basil, virtue is a mean, a middle ground. Commenting on Psalm 7:11 he explains that the "upright in heart" strive for the mean of virtue, avoiding excess and deficiency.[89] Indeed, the "heart becomes crooked when it is at one time exalted through boastfulness, at another time dejected through afflictions and humiliations."[90]

The mean of virtue brings tranquillity, or—negatively connoted—indifference or apathy. Stoic indifference Basil identifies with Christian meekness. "Those of calm character and so free from all passion that they have no confusion present in their souls, they are the ones called meek."[91] Basil adds a strong Christian coloring to Stoic tranquillity when he urges his congregation to "possess a calm mind, a tranquil and unconfused state of soul" free not only from the agitation of the passions but also from detraction of false doctrine.[92] Heresy offends against meekness and calmness of mind.

Tranquillity of mind is not born of the mind's inactivity. It demands "withdrawal from the affairs of the world,"[93] but it is not thinking about nothing and doing nothing. Rather, tranquillity of mind is the condition for the contemplation of the truth and comes with openness to the good. When the face of God shines upon us, we are given what belongs to the holy; we are made "gentle and untroubled in every way, because of our readiness for the good."[94] The passions hinder not only the pursuit of moral good but also the vision of speculative truth. They "are confounding and disturbing to the clear-sightedness of the soul."[95] As Basil asks, "how will he declare the truth, who has never given time to learning and has buried his mind in such mass of flesh?"[96] One cannot both labor at the library and indulge oneself at the brothel.

88. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 7, 3 (PG 29, 233D–236A); FC 46:169.
89. Ibid. 7, 7 (PG 29, 244D); FC 46:176.
90. Ibid. (PG 29, 245A); FC 46:177.
91. Ibid. 33, 2 (PG 29, 356C); FC 46:252.
92. Ibid. 10 (PG 29, 376C); FC 46:266.
93. Ibid. 3 (PG 29, 357B); FC 46:253.
94. Ibid. 29, 6 (PG 29, 320B); FC 46:222.
95. Ibid. 33, 3 (PG 29, 357B); FC 46:253.
96. Ibid. 29, 6 (PG 29, 320D); FC 46:223.

Sin, then, leads to error and vice. Certainly, the tumult and confusion caused by the passions will cause sin, but they could not besiege the soul if they were not first permitted to do so. The Psalter begins with a beatitude: "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly and hath not stood in the way of sinners" (Ps 1:1). Basil wonders at the meaning of "hath not stood," and Romans 7:9 comes to his mind: "But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Is not the meaning clear? Sin revived and the mind died because "the mind did not prevail over the baser thoughts but permitted its reason to be enslaved by the passions."[97] Basil employs a common simile to describe the soul of the sinner: the pleasures of the body defile him, and he is "wrapped up in the passions of the flesh as in mud."[98]

Basil does not restrict himself to ethical matters in his sermons, for they reflect as well his training in Greek metaphysics. On one occasion Basil measures the Platonic conception of creation against the Christian one. Indeed, he refuses to allow a Platonic interpretation of Genesis 1:2, "But the earth was invisible and unfinished." When the "counterfeiters of truth" refer this passage to preexistent uncreated matter, they distort the meaning of the Scriptures.[99] Plato's arguments in the *Timaeus* are simply wrongheaded and shallow, and Basil offers a sound refutation after which he calls on the Platonists to "cease from their mythical fictions."[100]

But the Greeks, of course, did not get metaphysics all wrong. As in *On the Holy Spirit* (previously considered), in his sermons Basil sees fit to draw upon the Stoic and Aristotelian understanding of quality. One of the most troubling passages in the first chapter of Genesis is the creation of light, on the first day, before the creation of the sun, on the fourth day. Many Fathers would take the light of the first day to be spiritual and the light of the fourth day to be physical, but not Basil. The sun is a composite body, made up of a "recipient substance" and

97. Ibid. 1, 5 (PG 29, 221C); FC 46:160.
98. Ibid. 7, 3 (PG 29, 236A); FC 46:169.
99. See *Hex.* 2, 2.
100. See ibid.

a "supervenient quality."[101] So the light of the sun is one thing, and the sun itself, another. God showed his power by creating the quality first and only afterwards creating the body that bore the quality. Basil offers an analogy also from the Scriptures: the burning bush. You could not, he tells his audience, "separate the burning property of fire from its brilliance."[102] But this is precisely what God did in order to provide an incredible spectacle for Moses.

Despite all his own learning, Basil urged his congregation not to inquire, on their part, into the constitution of the earth; such an exercise would only make the mind dizzy.[103] They should not, he said, "search for some nature destitute of qualities, existing without quality of itself."[104] Were reason to eliminate each of the qualities of the earth, nothing would be left. "If you remove the black," writes Basil, "the cold, the weight, the density, the qualities pertaining to taste, or any others which are perceptible, there will be no basic substance [*hypokeimenon*]."[105]

Antiochene or Alexandrian? Literalist or Allegorist?

Whenever someone inquires about the character of a Father's interpretation of the Scriptures, there is likely to be one of two answers: the Father in question is either an Alexandrian or an Antiochene, or he is some hybrid of the two.[106] The story has been told many times, and it goes something like this. Pantaenus founded the Alexandrian School of exegesis, but Origen is its outstanding representative, and it is characterized above all by the spiritual or allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, a spiritual interpretation that need not be beholden to the literal meaning of the text. Indeed, Origen is quite well known for his claim that some texts do not have a literal meaning. Alexandri-

101. Ibid. 6, 3 (PG 29, 121C); FC 46:86.
102. Ibid. (PG 29, 121C); FC 46:86–87.
103. See ibid. 1, 8.
104. Ibid. (PG 29, 21A); FC 46:14.
105. Ibid. (PG 29, 21B); FC 46:14.
106. The categories themselves have come under some scrutiny, especially by Frances Young; see *Biblical Exegesis,* 162–69; "The Rhetorical Schools," 182–99; and "Exegetical Method," 291–304.

an exegesis, if we suffer the oxymoron, is usually judged by moderns to be arbitrary, reckless, and irresponsible.

The Antiochene School, though, has secured modern good will and sympathy. It was founded by Diodore of Tarsus in the fourth century in conscious opposition to Origenist excesses. As John O'Keefe writes, "since, according to the standard reading, Antiochene exegetes rejected the allegorical methods of Alexandria in favor of a more literal interpretive style, the Antiochene approach was superior."[107] They, like us, respected the literal, the historical, and the human. Their project failed in the ancient world for two reasons. First, they "simply did not have the tools to fulfill the promise of their experiments; that day had to wait until the philological innovations of the nineteenth century." Secondly, their ancient colleagues were not large-minded enough to appreciate them; they never got a fair hearing for their ideas.[108]

It is not difficult to marshal texts to reinforce the typical description both of the Antiochenes as opposed to allegory and in favor of the literal sense, and of the Alexandrians as partial to allegory and indifferent to the literal sense. Let us consider a couple of examples from Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia. The spiritual interpretations of Origen and the Alexandrian School are often benign and sometimes fanciful. Consider, for instance, Origen's interpretation of the angel Gabriel striking Zechariah mute for doubting the truth of his message that Elizabeth will bear a son. Origen writes that "Zechariah's silence is the silence of prophets in the people of Israel."[109] The Word no longer speaks to the Jews and has passed over to the Christians. Zechariah, while mute, nods and makes signs to others, and this too has an allegorical significance. Zechariah's noddings are empty signs, gestures, or deeds that lack the rational character of words. These represent the Jewish practices that "lack words and reason. . . . To this very day

107. O'Keefe, "Toward a Reassessment of Antiochene Exegesis," 86.

108. Ibid., 92. Here O'Keefe reports the judgments, respectively, of Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode* and Young, *Biblical Exegesis.* O'Keefe describes Young's book as "an attempt . . . to give the Antiochene tradition a chance it did not have in antiquity" (n. 22).

109. Origen, *Homilies on Luke,* Hom. 5; FC 94:20.

the people of Israel are mute and dumb. The people who rejected the Word from their midst could not be anything but mute and dumb."[110]

Most of Origen's spiritual interpretation is not so outlandish, even if free from the constraints of the literal sense. The angel, Luke reports, announced the news of the savior's birth to shepherds. Origen asks, "Do you think that the words of the Scriptures signify nothing else, nothing more divine, but only say this, that an angel came to shepherds and spoke to them?"[111] God's Word cannot be trite. These shepherds to whom the angel speaks, then, are the Church's pastors, and the shepherds of the Church are unable to guard and lead their flock unless the Good Shepherd accompanies and helps them. But a given text need not have only one spiritual meaning. The shepherds of whom Luke speaks are also the angels who govern human affairs. "It was a great joy," Origen writes, "to these shepherds [the angels], to whom the care of men and provinces had been entrusted, that Christ had come into the world."[112]

Select passages from Diodore and Theodore also confirm the impression that the real difference between the two schools is the way they use, and do not use, allegory. "We demand them to know," Diodore wrote, "that we prefer much more the historical comprehension of the text than the allegorical."[113] Nothing but fragments of Diodore's voluminous work survives, but the Church historian Socrates reports that Diodore "wrote many treatises in which he limited his attention to the literal sense of scripture, avoiding that which was mystical."[114] Sozomen Salaminius Hermias reports the same, simply saying that Diodore "avoided allegory."[115] Diodore's school taught much more than biblical exegesis; the students there were "ardent aspirants after perfection" in the monastic life under the guidance of Diodore and Carterius.[116] Sozomen sees this school as a sort of Christian higher

110. Ibid., 21.
111. Ibid., Hom. 12; FC 94:48.
112. Ibid.; FC 94:49.
113. Cited in de Barjeau, *L'école exégétique d'Antioche,* 35, n. 3.
114. Socrates, *H. E.* 6, 3; NPNF 2, 2:139.
115. Sozomen, *H. E.* 8, 2; NPNF 2, 2:399.
116. Socrates, *H. E.* 6, 3; NPNF 2, 2:139.

education. Many of Diodore's students had studied Greek philosophy before attending Diodore's school wherein they exercised themselves in the sacred books and practiced "philosophy according to the law of the Church."[117] This impressive institution produced a series of notable bishops and theologians: John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia who himself taught John of Antioch, Theodoret of Cyrus, Ibas of Edessa, and Nestorius.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, whom the Syrian Church calls simply The Interpreter, railed against the Alexandrian method of interpretation. Theodore sought to undermine what the Alexandrians took to be the scriptural authorization of their method: Paul, they claimed, used allegory in Galatians 4 just as they do, and he even used the word "allegorical" to describe his interpretation of the children of Hagar and those of Rachel. Theodore thought the Alexandrians misread Paul and, in fact, interpreted the Scriptures in a way opposite that of Paul's. Of them, Theodore writes: "Their wish is to deny any difference between the whole of the history recorded in the divine Scripture and dreams that occur at night. Adam, they say, is not Adam—this being a place where they are especially prone to interpret divine Scripture in a spiritual way (spiritual interpretation is what they like to have their nonsense called)—paradise is not paradise and the serpent is not a serpent."[118] These texts from Origen, Diodore, and Theodore, then, appear to give some credence to the standard account of Antiochene and Alexandrian categories, but the story is far more complicated.

The standard account has come under increasing scrutiny recently. Frances Young and John O'Keefe, for example, have shown that the typical employment of the categories is misleading.[119] We cannot responsibly anoint the Antiochenes as the fourth-century forerunners of

117. Sozomen, *H. E.* 8, 2; NPNF 2, 2:399.

118. Theodore, *Commentary on Galatians* (4:24), 151–52.

119. See O'Keefe, "Toward a Reassessment of Antiochene Exegesis." Young called her own explanation of the exegesis of Eusebius (in *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*) "a description that could be regarded as typical of standard accounts but is surely, though I now say it myself, somewhat misleading" (Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 121).

the historical-critical method. "No Antiochene," says Frances Young, "could have imagined the kind of critical stance of the Biblical Theology movement, explicitly locating revelation not in the text of scripture but in the historicity of events behind the text, events to which we only have access by reconstructing them from the texts, treating the texts as documents providing historical data."[120] In fact, she continues, "they are anxious about precisely those stories which modern historians are most disposed to treat as mythological."[121]

O'Keefe agrees with Young's criticism but adds one of his own; the difference between the two schools turns not on their view toward allegory as a literary method but on their stand on spiritual interpretation and the unity of the Old and New Testaments. O'Keefe shows that Diodore and Theodore use allegory in order make Psalm 28 "fit into the chronological framework of the book of Kings,"[122] but, in general, they are opposed to using it for Christological or ecclesial interpretations. It is not, properly speaking, allegory that gives them trouble, but spiritual interpretation. O'Keefe, borrowing the terminology of Erich Auerbach, suggests that the Antiochenes drank deeply of the ancient grammatical-exegetical tradition and adopted the opposition to the "vertical figuration" that attended it;[123] "history is about human things, and these should not be confused with things divine."[124] Thus, he thinks that Leontius was basically right when he charged that the exegesis of Diodore and Theodore was not truly Christian.

Basil is commonly placed in the Antiochene School, conventionally understood. William Tieck calls Basil a proto-Antiochene, a literalist, a proto-Protestant, and the like. All who hold this position inevitably base their arguments upon the *Hexaemeron.* But one gets quite a dif-

120. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 167.

121. Ibid., 169. Young makes a couple of other points against the traditional understanding of the categories: all patristic commentary on Scripture draws on a common approach to literary texts, and where they differ they have appropriated different parts of ancient paideia; in addition to *Biblical Exegesis,* see Young, "The Rhetorical Schools."

122. O'Keefe, "Toward a Reassessment of Antiochene Exegesis," 97.

123. Ibid., 95. See also Auerbach, *Mimesis* and *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature.*

124. Ibid., 104.

ferent sense of Basil's scriptural interpretation in the homilies on the Psalms wherein he seems rather close to the Alexandrian way. Indeed, Richard Lim has argued that Basil never abandoned his Alexandrian and Origenistic heritage.[125] Given recent progress in understanding the Antiochene and Alexandrian categories, we cannot simply ask whether Basil was one or the other; we must be clear about what we are asking. It is better to ask about his attitude toward, and use of, spiritual interpretation and his position on the unity of the two Testaments than to ask whether he was for or against allegory as a literary method. It is unlikely that the categories Antiochene and Alexandrian will fall out of use, and they certainly can be salvaged so long as we are precise in our use of them. Perhaps then we can frame our question in this way. Is the Basil of the homilies on the Psalms, wherein he used almost exclusively spiritual interpretation, the same as the Basil of the *Hexaemeron,* wherein he disparages allegory? And if Basil did indeed change his approach to the Scriptures, was this due to his correspondence with Diodore?

Theodore, the quintessential Antiochene (no matter how the word is understood), showed great interest in the history behind the Psalms, and we can certainly say that Basil less diligently and less consistently sought to illuminate the Psalms by placing them in historical context. Most of the time he turns to questions of history only when there is some problem, such as a contradiction between an historical account and a psalmic inscription. The inscription of Psalm 7, for example, has Chusi, David's companion, as the son of Jemini while 2 Samuel has him as the son of Arachi (2 Sm 17:5). Basil solves the problem by explaining that "son of Jemini" means "son of the right hand."[126] The Psalm thus designates Chusi by his goodness: he informed against Absalom in order to protect David from him. But Basil quickly leaves behind the intrigue among David, Absalom, and Chusi and interprets the Psalm as though the prophet were speaking in the name of a Christian.

125. Lim, "The Politics of Interpretation," 351–70.
126. See *Hom. sup. Pss.* 7, 1.

Even when Basil holds an historical interest beyond the inscription, it is not long before he spiritualizes the text. Considering Psalm 33, Basil asks "now, how is it that the inscription names Abimelech, but history mentions Achis, as king of the Gethites?" Tradition, he maintains, has handed down the explanation that "Abimelech" is a title designating a kingly office, like "Caesar" or "Pharaoh."[127] So the king of the Gethites is named Achis by birth but Abimelech by office. In the case of Psalm 33, Basil maintains an historical interpretation beyond the inscription. He places words in the mouth of David to draw out the historical context of Psalm 33:3 ("In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and rejoice"): "since with the help of God, by deceiving my enemies . . . I have successfully obtained safety without war, by only the changing of my countenance."[128] He does not, however, apply the whole Psalm to these events in the life of David, even where it would be the natural interpretation. By the time Basil gets to Psalm 33:5 ("And he delivered me from all my troubles") he has begun a moralizing interpretation that pertains more to the life of the Christian than to that of David.[129]

Although Basil shows little concern for the historical context of the Psalms except when so provoked by the inscription, he does apply Psalm 7:7 to David and Absalom. "And arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which thou hast commanded" refers to the resurrection of Christ from the dead as well as to Absalom's transgression of the fourth commandment. David "urges God," writes Basil, "for the correction of that son himself and for the restraint of the many, not to be long-suffering, but to rise in anger and, having risen up, to avenge his own command."[130] Psalm 7:12 also applies to Absalom. Lest one think that God's providence has failed because of Absalom's for-a-time-unavenged wickedness, David proclaims that "God is a just judge,

127. See ibid. 33, 1.

128. Ibid. 33, 2 (PG 29, 356B); FC 46:251.

129. For further examples of historical questions and psalmic inscriptions, see *Hom. sup. Pss.* 59, 2, and *Hom. sup. Pss.* 61, 1.

130. Ibid., 7, 4 (PG 29, 236D); FC 46:170.

strong and patient" (Ps 7:12). "Do not be," Basil explains, "so poorly disposed toward God as to think that He is too weak to avenge, for He is also strong. What reason is there, then, that swift vengeance is not inflicted on the sinner? Because he is patient."[131]

While Basil rarely provides an historical and literal interpretation of the Psalms, he often offers spiritual interpretations of varying sorts. Most refer to Christ or to an event in the life of Christ while the remaining refer to the Holy Spirit, the Christian life, the soul, or the Church. One spiritual interpretation does not preclude another, as Basil will offer many for a single text. His spiritual interpretations vary not only in their referent (be it Christ, the soul, or the Church) but also in their character. That is to say, Basil will employ allegory, properly speaking, as well as the more common spiritual reading, which simply applies the text in a Christian setting rather than making the text an allegorical code having to be deciphered. For example, Psalm 45:4 reads, "the mountains were troubled with his strength." "Mountain" here has no deeper sense underlying the literal sense. Rather, it stands for something to which it bears no intrinsic connection. "Mountains" betokens the arrogant, the rulers of the world, and the fathers of perishable wisdom.[132]

When Basil reads the Psalms, he thinks above all of Christ. It is Christ of whom David speaks in Psalm 44:8 when he says, "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The oil of gladness, moreover, is the Holy Spirit, and the fellows are Christians.[133] Christ is the sword of Psalm 44:4—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty." Basil explains that the thigh is the symbol of "efficiency in generation," and just as Christ is called life, way, bread, grapevine, and light, "so, too, he is a sword that cuts

131. Ibid. 7, 7 (PG 29 245B); FC 46:177. Basil also applies Psalm 7:15 to David and Absalom; see ibid. 7, 18.

132. See *Hom. sup. Pss.* 45, 3. See also ibid. 28, 1–3, wherein the tabernacle stands for the flesh, the ram for the bishop, and the holy court for the Church; and ibid. 32, 2, wherein the harp is the body and the ten-stringed psaltery is the Ten Commandments.

133. See ibid. 44, 8.

through the sensual part of the soul and mortifies the motions of concupiscence."[134]

Indeed, many psalmic verses make the saint think of the incarnation itself. On one occasion Basil finds a pregnant demonstrative. The psalmist said, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him" (Ps 33:7). This verse calls first to Basil's mind the Christian believer. "By the demonstrative word for the man who was poor because of God, and hungry and thirsty and naked," explains Basil, "he calls forth your understanding . . . all but pointing with his finger: this disciple of Christ."[135] But the text equally applies to Christ himself "who being rich by nature, became poor for our sakes in order that by His poverty we might become rich."[136] There is also the title of Psalm 29 that indicates that the canticle was written for the dedication of the house of David. In its "material form" the psalm was delivered in the time of Solomon, but spiritually it signifies the Incarnation of the Word.[137] Finally—though we could find many more examples—Psalm 33:19 refers to the incarnation. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart." Basil writes that "these words hold openly the prophecy of the coming of the Lord" in the flesh.[138]

Basil refers many Psalms to events in the life of Christ. Psalm 44:3—"Grace is poured abroad in thy lips"—refers to the advancement of Christ's human nature in wisdom and grace,[139] while when David says, "but God will redeem my soul from the hand of hell" (Ps 48:16), he "predicts the descent of the Lord into hell, who will redeem the soul of the prophet along with the others."[140] Psalms 32:10 and 44:8 make Basil think of the passion of the Lord, but the latter reference is more patent.[141] "Myrrh and aloes and cassia perfume thy garments" (Ps 44:8) more readily calls to mind the passion than does "the Lord bringeth to nought the counsels of nations" (Ps 32:10).

134. Ibid. 44, 5 (PG 29, 400A–B); FC 46:285.
135. Ibid. 33, 5 (PG 29, 361B); FC 46:256.
136. Ibid. (PG 29, 361C); FC 46:256.
137. See ibid. 29, 1.
138. Ibid. 33, 12 (PG 29 380B); FC 46:269.
139. See ibid. 44, 5.
140. Ibid. 48, 9 (PG 29, 453C); FC 46:328.
141. See ibid. 32, 6 and 44, 9.

The prophet, as Basil is wont to call him, spoke not only of Christ but also of Christians. As we have seen, the Christian is the poor man of Psalm 33:7. When the psalmist writes, "Let the meek hear" (Ps 33:3), it "means the same as 'Let the disciples of Christ hear.'"[142] Christians are also the blessed nation whose God is the Lord and "the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance" (Ps 32:12).[143] In Psalm 14:5 the prophet praises "the perfect man who is about to arrive at the unchangeable life" for not loaning money at interest.[144] And in Psalm 33:12 the children to whom the Father will teach the fear of the Lord are the baptized. Basil paraphrases the psalmist: "'Come,' that is, 'because of your good deeds approach me, children,' since you are considered worthy because of your regeneration to become sons of light."[145] Our spiritual son of Origen does more than apply the words of the Psalm to Christians, a kind of *sensus plenior;* he also allegorizes certain texts, decoding the references to Christians. Basil discerns the allegorical meaning of Psalm 28:3—"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters." The verse can refer to the baptism of the Lord wherein the voice of the Father thundered "a might voice of testimony." "Waters" here also stands for the saints "because rivers flow from within them (Jn 7:38), that is, spiritual teaching which refreshes the souls of the hearers."[146]

Very similar to the texts about Christians are those applied to the Church and to the soul. Psalm 48:2–3, for example, addresses all the nations, all the inhabitants of the earth,[147] and Basil refers this to the Holy Spirit summoning a universal Church "from all classes of life."[148] The psalmist writes of Jerusalem in Psalm 45, and Basil thinks of the Church and the soul. The river whose streams make the city of God,

142. Ibid. 33, 2 (PG 29, 356C); FC 46:252.

143. See ibid. 32, 7.

144. Ibid. 14 bis, 1 (PG 29, 265A); FC 46:181.

145. Ibid. 33, 8 (PG 29, 372B–C); FC 46:263.

146. Ibid. 28, 4 (PG 29, 292C), 200. Basil goes on to explain that the cedars of Psalm 28:5 are the puffed up wicked (ibid. 28, 5; FC 46:203–4).

147. Ps 48:2–3: "Hear these things, all ye nations; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world. All you that are earthborn, and you sons of men: both rich and poor together."

148. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 48, 1 (PG 29, 433B); FC 46:312.

the Church, joyful is the Holy Spirit (Ps 45:5).[149] God is in the midst of the city and "will help it in the morning early" (Ps 45:6). Basil takes Jerusalem to be the soul or the Church, and morning is the beginning of spiritual illumination.[150] Sometimes the prophet speaks in the name of the Church, as in Psalm 44:7 when he says, "I shall remember thy name throughout all generations." The Church remembers by praising.[151] One more striking example will suffice. In Psalm 44:10, David speaks of the queen, standing on the right, "arrayed in gilded clothing embroidered with varied colors." Basil furnishes the spiritual meaning: the queen is the Church and the soul, clad in various pious doctrines and virtues.[152]

Basil recognizes as least two basic levels of meaning in the Psalms, a material, historical, literal meaning and a spiritual one. Most of Basil's spiritual readings are Christological, but a good many are ecclesial or sacramental. Although he does not explicitly say that some Scriptures have only a spiritual meaning, he gives only a spiritual interpretation for many of the Psalms that he considers. Sometimes the literal meaning does not make sense. Psalm 33:21 proclaims the protection of the Lord for the "bones of the just": "not one of them shall be broken." "Is it necessary," Basil asks, "to hold fast to the word and to be satisfied with the thought which readily falls upon our ears?"[153] He is clearly thinking of the literal sense here. In point of fact, to hold fast to it here is absurd for many of the righteous: many Christians have suffered broken bones for the sake of the Lord and in witness to him. Again Basil asks, "Do you know the nature of intellectual bones?"[154] His exegesis of the Psalms clearly calls to mind the methods of Origen, and many would deny it the name "exegesis" for that. At least in his homilies on the Psalms Basil finds the spiritual meaning more interesting and more relevant: it is the "meaning which is noble and fitted to the divine Scriptures."[155] In the case of the Psalms, the prophet

149. See ibid. 45, 4.
150. See ibid. 45, 5.
151. See ibid. 44, 12.
152. See ibid. 44, 9–11.
153. Ibid. 33, 13 (PG 29, 381C); FC 46:271.
154. Ibid. (PG 29, 384D–385A); FC 46:273.
155. Ibid. 28, 1 (PG 29, 281B); FC 46:193.

belches forth words with noble meanings because he has consumed a spiritual feast. Prophecy is a spiritual belch, air from the bursting bubbles of effervescent spiritual food. The prophetic soul has fed on the bread of heaven (Jn 6:51–52) and is filled by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Mt 4:4). "This soul," says Basil, "nourished with the divine learning, sends forth an utterance proper to its food,"[156] and this food generates not merely literal utterances but spiritual ones of profound meaning.

Certainly, Basil's exegesis of the Psalms did not gain for him the reputation that he now enjoys among scholars. It is not for the homilies on the Psalms that his scriptural interpretation is called responsible, literal, practical, and based in common sense.[157] It is not the homilies on the Psalms that display what William Tieck calls a "wholesome and positive respect for the natural meaning of words without their being tortured or twisted."[158] Tieck is not alone in this judgment, though he particularly lavishes praise upon Basil. Nearly all modern commentators place Basil on the side of Antioch, on the side against allegory and in favor of the literal sense. Clearly, moderns esteem him not for his homilies on the Psalms but for his *Hexaemeron.*

Basil wrote the *Hexaemeron* late in life, and it has been taken as his crowning achievement. His invective against allegory here makes readily understandable why so many place him with the Antiochenes, at least if one understands the Antiochene hallmark as opposition to allegory. First, there is the passage in his second homily on creation, by far the mildest of his rebukes of allegorical interpretation. "Passing over in silence all figurative and allegorical explanation at the present time, let us accept," Basil exhorts, "the concept of darkness simply without curiosity, following the meaning of Scripture."[159] Indirectly alleging that the allegorists are "curious" becomes a serious charge when one thinks of Basil's attacks against the curiosity of the pagans.

156. Ibid. 44, 3 (PG 29, 393B–C); FC 46:280.
157. See Tieck, "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 159.
158. Ibid.
159. *Hex.* 2, 5 (PG 29, 40C); FC 46:29.

His condemnation of allegory grew progressively stronger, for in his next sermon he called allegorical exegesis "dream interpretations" and "old women's tales." In the context Basil is disputing some ecclesiastical writers' reading of the waters above and below the firmament (Gn 6–7), according to which the waters above are good spirits and the waters below, evil spirits. "Let us," Basil writes, "consider water as water." Interestingly, as we have seen, he himself has offered an allegorical reading of the water in Psalm 28:3—"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters." Indeed, he interprets them in nearly the same way as the allegorists do in Genesis 6–7. The waters upon which the voice of the Lord rests are nothing other than good spirits, "saints."[160]

We find the most important antiallegorical text in Basil's last sermon on creation. He writes:

> I know the laws of allegory although I did not invent them of myself, but have met them in the works of others. Those who do not admit the common meaning of the Scriptures say that water is not water, but some other nature, and they explain a plant and a fish according to their opinion. They describe also the production of reptiles and wild animals, changing it according to their own notions, just like the dream interpreters, who interpret for their own ends the appearances seen in their dreams. When I hear "grass," I think of grass, and in the same manner I understand everything as it is said, a plant, a fish, a wild animal, and an ox.[161]

Basil goes on to say that the allegorists "bestow on the Scriptures a dignity of their own imagining," and they consider themselves "wiser than the revelation of the Spirit" introducing their own ideas "in pretense of an explanation."[162]

There is nothing ambiguous about this rejection of allegory; it is interesting, however, to compare it with Basil's own practice in the *Hexaemeron.* He says in *Hex.* 9, 1 that when he hears "grass" he thinks of grass, but earlier he admonishes his congregation to think of human nature whenever they see grass.[163] For today a person "is vigorous

160. See *Hom. sup. Pss.* 28, 3.
161. *Hex.* 9, 1 (PG 29, 188C); FC 46:135.
162. Ibid. (PG 29, 189B); FC 46:136.
163. See *Hex.* 5, 2.

in body, grown fleshy from delicacies, with a flowerlike complexion, in the prime of life, fresh and eager, and irresistible in attack; tomorrow that same one is piteous or wasted with age, or weakened by disease."[164] Again, in *Hex.* 9, 1, Basil says that he understands a plant "as it is said," i.e., as a plant. Previously, though, when he read "plants" he thought of insidious and divisive heretics "who, not being truly instructed in the Scripture but corrupted by the teaching of the evil one, join themselves to the sound body of the Church in order that they may secretly inflict their harm on the more guileless."[165] Finally, reproving the allegorists, Basil says that he takes a fish to be a fish, but he also offers much moral instruction in meditation upon the animal kingdom. The Lord has made animals to behave in certain ways so that we can be instructed in piety when we contemplate creation. He encourages husbands and wives to use the "marriage" of the viper and the sea lamprey as an example.[166] He calls the fickle and the "wind veins" among us octopuses.[167] And the greedy are big fish who eat smaller ones.[168] It seems, then, too simple to say that, for Basil, a fish is a fish.

While Basil's use of allegory in the *Hexaemeron* tempers his invective against it, it is nonetheless true that in this work on creation he uses far less spiritual interpretation than in the homilies on the Psalms. There is also the striking fact that the *Hexaemeron* contains the anti-allegorical polemic at all; one is quite surprised to find it after a reading of the homilies on the Psalms. Nearly certainly the homilies on the Psalms were written before the *Hexaemeron,* and this leads us to ask what happened to Basil in the meantime.[169] Did his correspondence with Diodore convince him of the dangers of allegory? Can the difference between the two works be explained by a difference in audience? Or by the difference between the Psalms and Genesis?

164. Ibid. (PG 29, 97D); FC 46:69.
165. Ibid. 5 (PG 29, 104C); FC 46:73.
166. See *Hex.* 7, 5–6.
167. See ibid. 3.
168. See ibid.
169. On the date of the homilies on the Psalms, see Bernardi, *La Prédication des pères cappadociens,* 23–29. Bernardi dates the homilies to 368–375. On the date of the *Hexaemeron,* see Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 360–63.

Basil knew Diodore and corresponded with him before he wrote the *Hexaemeron.* Diodore was present in Armenia when Basil was there, and he witnessed the trouble that Basil had with Theodotus of Nicopolis.[170] We have two letters of Basil to Diodore. In one, Basil admonishes Diodore for wanting to marry the sister of his dead wife. Basil supposes that someone has assumed the person of Diodore in order to ask such an unseemly question (for it was not consistent with the Antiochene's character), but he goes on to refute the practice just in case.[171] The other letter (Ep. 160) interests us more, for here we learn that Basil read two of Diodore's works. He praised one for its brevity and simplicity and criticized the other as esoteric and laborious to read. If only we knew which of Diodore's works Basil had read, and if only the works of Diodore had survived. In their absence, it is impossible to say whether, and to what extent, Basil adopted from Diodore the methods of the Antiochene School. Indeed, Richard Lim thinks that Basil did not employ Diodore's method at all. Basil, for example, does not use etymology in the Antiochene way; his practice, rather, is "derivative and unsystematic."[172] But as Lim himself admits, it is speculative to draw firm conclusions from so little evidence. Lim argues that Basil's antiallegorical invective is better explained by a consideration of his audience than by positing a late-in-life conversion to the Antiochene method and a renunciation of his own heritage.

Allegorical interpretation is not for the unlearned and the simple, but for the advanced and mature; one cannot give meat to babes. Moreover, allegory in the hands of the unlearned leads to heresy. This, Lim argues, is Basil's concern in the *Hexaemeron.* He is not rejecting allegory simply, but allegory for his particular congregation. Lim makes a good argument. First, he shows that the antiallegorical invective is not necessarily anti-Origenist. Origen was not the only Father to practice allegory, for it had become a very successful weapon

170. See Ep. 99, 3; trans. Deferrari, 2:179.
171. See Ep. 160.
172. Lim, "The Politics of Interpretation," 355.

in the hands of heretics like the Gnostics.[173] Secondly, Lim describes the audience of the *Hexaemeron,* clearly showing that they are not the sort ready for advanced scriptural study. Basil's flock included tradesmen, we know,[174] and he addressed primarily "the proverbial man in the street."[175] "Basil's audience," Lim writes, "was not a select group of Christian intellectuals or those whom he considered spiritually advanced. Some he accuses of being libertines and inhumane husbands and he openly" fears that some of his flock will rush to the dice after Church.[176] Clearly, Basil is not preaching to the choir.

Lim's explanation of Basil's attitude toward allegory, however, does not explain the difference in character between the *Hexaemeron* and the homilies on the Psalms. As his argument goes, because Basil employs allegory in the homilies on the Psalms, it would stand to reason that there he had a different audience, an advanced audience, that could benefit from allegory without falling into its heretical traps. Jean Bernardi has shown, though, that this is not the case. He shows that the homilies are addressed "au grand public."[177] The words of Psalm 29 inspire Basil to admonish his congregants ("Sing to the Lord, O ye his saints") (Ps 29:5): "How many stand there, coming from fornication?" Basil sharply demands. "How many from theft? How many concealing in their hearts deceit? How many lying? They think they are singing, although in truth they are not singing."[178] Apparently he had reason to think that he was not among the holy without spot or wrinkle. Indeed, Basil thought these to be few. Not many say, "God is our refuge" (Ps 45:2), and mean it; few "depend wholly upon God and breathe him and have all hope and trust in him."[179] Basil then turns to chide his flock directly. "Is a child sick? You look around for an enchanter or one

173. See ibid., 355–60.
174. See *Hex.* 3, 1.
175. Lim, "The Politics of Interpretation," 361.
176. Ibid. See *Hex.* 7, 5–6 and 8, 8.
177. Bernardi, *La Prédication des pères cappadociens,* 33–34. Indeed, Bernardi thinks that in Basil's congregation the baptized are a minority.
178. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 29, 3 (PG 29, 312C); FC 46:217–18.
179. Ibid. 45, 2 (PG 29, 417C); FC46:299.

who puts superstitious marks on the necks of the innocent children; or finally, you go to a doctor and to medicines, having neglected him who is able to save."[180] For a troubled dream they run to the interpreters, and in fear of an enemy, secure a patron. "In short," Basil rebukes them, "in every need you contradict yourself—in word, naming God as your refuge; in act, drawing on aid from useless and vain things."[181] One final example will show that Basil addresses in the homilies on the Psalms not the spiritual elite, but the nonbaptized and the baptized who have much room to grow in holiness. Again, he asks his people a series of pointed questions: "Have you reviled? Bless. Have you defrauded? Make restitution. Have you been intoxicated? Fast. Have you made false pretensions? Be humble. Have you been envious? Console. Have you murdered? Bear witness, or afflict your body with the equivalent of martyrdom through confession."[182] So, then, Basil did not deliver the homilies on the Psalms and the *Hexaemeron* to different audiences, but in the one he liberally uses spiritual and allegorical exegesis while in the other he severely criticizes it. This is where Lim's otherwise persuasive argument falters. If his answer is not the right one, what is?

Basil's exegetical method remained basically the same, although later in life it became more sober, mature, and critical. In comparing the homilies on the Psalms and those on Genesis, we must remember the very great difference between these biblical books as well as their different handling among the Fathers. Genesis, of course, was unusually subject to perverse allegorical interpretations, especially in the hands of the Gnostics. And the Psalms were (and continue to be) especially open to Christological readings. Basil's exegetical method did not radically change in the years during which he wrote homilies on the Psalms and creation, though it is true that he became far more sensitive to the abuses of the allegorical method. Perhaps he acquired

180. Ibid. (PG 29, 417C); FC 46:299.
181. Ibid. (PG 29, 417D); FC 46:299.
182. Ibid. 32, 2 (PG 29, 325D–328A); FC 46:299.

this sensitivity from Diodore, but one certainly cannot say that Basil took over Diodore's theological position of the priority of history over providence, of the literal over the spiritual, of the human over the divine. The best evidence for Basil's fundamental consistency is not the character of the audiences that he addressed but the use of spiritual interpretations in the *Hexaemeron.* These spiritual interpretations, akin to those of the homilies on the Psalms, soften the force of the antiallegorical invective. God created the moon with its changing shapes, for example, to remind us of the inconstancy of our nature.[183] Or again, Genesis 1:11—"and the fruit tree that bears fruit containing seed of its own kind and of its own likeness on the earth"—leads Basil to expound upon those trees more essential to human life. He mentions vines and calls to his flock's mind Jesus' words in John 15 as well as Matthew 21:33 about the householder who "planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower." The Lord "calls the human souls the vineyard," and the hedge is the commandments and the protection of angels, while the stakes that the vinedresser would use to prop the vines are the apostles, prophets, and teachers of the Church.[184] "Our soul is 'dug about,'" Basil explains, "when we put aside the cares of the world, which are a burden to our hearts."[185] "He who has laid aside carnal love and the desire of possessions, or who has considered the violent desire for this wretched little glory detestable and contemptible, has, so to say, been 'dug about' and, freed of the vain burden of the earthy spirit, has breathed again."[186] Such texts indicate that Basil had become more mindful of the perils of allegory without substantially changing his method.

Basil as a Preacher

We have seen that Basil does not hesitate to confront the vices of his people. After all, what preacher today would interrogate the

183. See *Hex.* 6, 10.
184. Ibid. 5, 6 (PG 29, 108C); FC 46:76.
185. Ibid. (PG 29, 108D); FC 46:76.
186. Ibid. (PG 29, 109A); FC 46:76.

flock in such a way? "Have you murdered? Become a martyr in recompense?" While he did not hesitate to speak candidly and sometimes harshly with his congregation, clearly Basil did so out of genuine solicitude for them. He is constantly concerned about their edification. His sermons, while learned and eloquent, are not showcases for his genius and knowledge except by accident, for their primary purpose is to illuminate his people and guide them to greater holiness. His church, he knows, "does not expect a lecture on paradoxical concepts but seeks the resolution of problems with a view to edification."[187] He refuses in his first sermon on creation to examine in detail the heavens and the earth because such is not useful for edification,[188] and he turns back when he finds his sermon getting too esoteric.[189] In another place, Basil pleads with his brethren, "may you, whenever you see cultivated plants or wild ones, water plants or land plants, flowering or flowerless, recognize the grandeur in the tiniest thing, continue always in your admiration, and increase, I pray you, your love for the Creator."[190]

Any good preacher is considerate of his audience, even if not afraid to confront them. At one point, Basil notices some manual laborers in his audience and promises to shorten his discourse so that they can get to work while at the same time encouraging them to forget about their livelihood for the moment and give him their attention.[191] On another occasion, Basil was late to church. He had been serving another church earlier in the day and was somehow detained. He tells them to thank God that he was able to provide the liturgy for the others while "not altogether disappointing your love," for God "guides by his invisible power this visibly weak body of ours."[192] He went on to dismiss them early, after a discourse on a psalm they had been singing, since they had been waiting so long.

187. *Hex.* 11, 8 (SC 160:248, 23–25); trans. Harrison, 55.
188. See *Hex.* 1, 8.
189. See *Hex.* 3, 3.
190. *Hex.* 5, 9 (PG 29, 116B); FC 46:81. See also *Hex.* 4, 3; *Hex.* 4, 6; *Hex.* 5, 2; *Hex.* 5, 8.
191. See *Hex.* 3, 1.
192. *Hom. sup. Pss.* 114, 1 (PG 29, 484B); FC 46:351.

Basil knew the seriousness of his charge as a preacher. Psalm 44:6 reads "thy arrows are sharp, O thou most mighty," and the arrows, says Basil, are the preachers of the Gospel who prepare "the people to fall under Christ."[193] The preachers are simply the Lord's instruments in drawing his enemies unto him, reconciling them. Basil sees the preaching of the Gospel as a debt that he owes his congregation.[194] In a very striking passage, he compares himself to a woman whose breasts have dried up:

> When I compared the eagerness with which you listened and the inadequacy of my ability there came to my mind a certain similitude of a young child, already rather active but not yet weaned from its mother's milk, annoying the maternal breasts which were dry from weakness. The mother, even though she perceived that the sources of her milk were dry, being pulled and torn by him, offered him her breast, not in order that she might nourish the infant, but that she might make him stop crying. Accordingly, even though our powers have been dried up by this long and varied bodily illness, nevertheless, there is set before you, not a pleasure deserving of mention, but some things which satisfy.[195]

How could Basil's fold not have grown in admiration for this erudite and long-suffering bishop by such humble and solicitous words?

Scripture and Tradition

It is easy, if also anachronistic, to see in the Fathers an uncanny prescience. We have a tendency, that is, to read the Fathers according to later categories, to find in their texts answers to questions that we ask but that they never asked. But this obviously ill-advised inclination is the perversion of a good one. The Fathers are relevant; we think that, properly understood, they can speak to issues that they did not directly take up. Basil's *To Young Men* was used (and misused) at the time of

193. Ibid. 44, 6 (PG 29, 401C); FC 46:287.
194. See ibid. 14 bis, 1.
195. Ibid. 59, 1 (PG 29, 460A–B); FC 46:333.

the Renaissance to defend humanism.[196] Likewise his *Hexaemeron* exercised an influence far beyond its immediate context and purpose. Basil's understanding of tradition *(paradôsis)* has also attracted much attention; he had his own reasons to be concerned about tradition, and we have ours, especially since the Reformation and the Council of Trent. We would be remiss to conclude this chapter on Basil's general views of the Scriptures without mentioning their relationship to tradition, for he came to realize that neither Scripture nor tradition stands alone.

It was not a sixteenth-century *sola scriptura* but a fourth-century one that provoked Basil's thoughts on Scripture and tradition.[197] As we have seen, Basil "studied" the monastic and theological life in the school of Eustathius of Sebaste. Indeed, they had spent much time together and had spoken often about matters of faith.[198] Their relationship, though, fell apart over the question of the divinity of the Spirit. Hermann Dörries long ago showed that many of the objections and replies of *On the Holy Spirit* recapitulate the argument that Basil had with Eustathius.[199] Basil is trying to defend his doxology ("Glory to the Father, with [*meta*] the Son, with [*syn*] the Holy Spirit") that his opponents attack as unscriptural. "They continue screaming in our ears," Basil impatiently writes, "that to give glory *with* the Holy Spirit is unauthorized, unscriptural, et cetera."[200] "They clamor for written proofs," he writes in another place, "and reject the unwritten testimony of the Fathers as worthless, proving themselves worse than debtors who refuse to pay what they owe when there is no written evidence of the loan."[201] Against "this 'Puritan' or 'Protestant', so to speak, mentality of Eustathius, this acute 'biblicism,'"[202] Basil argues that the Scrip-

196. See Schucan, *Das Nachleben von Basilius Magnus.*

197. On the historical context here, see Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 26–40, and Kane, "St. Basil's *On the Holy Spirit,*" 24–26.

198. See Ep. 223.

199. See Dörries, De Spiritu Sancto.

200. *De Sp. S.* 27, 68 (PG 32, 193D–196A); trans. Anderson, 102–3.

201. Ibid. 10, 26 (PG 32, 112C); trans. Anderson, 46.

202. De Mendieta, *The "Unwritten" and "Secret" Apostolic Traditions,* 23.

tures cannot be rightly understood apart from apostolic and patristic tradition. This is the context for his well-known distinction between tradition and Scripture in *On the Holy Spirit* 27, 66. Here he differentiates *dogma* from *kêrygma,* the latter designating what the Church publicly proclaims, the former, what she reserves for the initiated.

The distinction, however, between *dogma* and *kêrygma* can be confusing. Basil distinguishes what is transmitted (one may call it the saving deposit) and how it is transmitted. The *kêrygmata* and *dogmata* together form the deposit, some of which "we have from scriptural teaching *(engraphos didaskalia),*" some of which "we have received from the tradition of the apostles, given to us in mystery *(en mystêriô)*."[203] In other words, the deposit would be made up of scriptural *kêrygmata* and scriptural *dogmata* as well as nonscriptural *kêrygmata* and *dogmata.* On this reading, the *kêrygmata* are "the bare words" or the public words, and the *dogmata* comprise the right understanding of these words.[204] The Scriptures are public, but the knowledge whereby they are properly understood is reserved to the initiated. This is why the Scriptures are obscure: obscurity conceals the *dogmata,* the right understanding of its teaching, lest it be despised for being familiar.[205] There are also, as Amand has indicated, kerygmatic and dogmatic unwritten traditions; things publicly known whose real meaning is not. "We all look to the East," Basil writes, "when we are praying *(kêrygma).* But few of us know that we are seeking after our own old country, the Paradise, which *God planted in Eden, in the East (dogma).* It is in the standing posture that we are offering our prayers, on the first day of

203. *De Sp. S.* 27, 66 (PG 32, 188A); my trans. I translate *eggraphos* as "scriptural" rather than "written," and will translate *agraphos* as "nonscriptural" rather than "unwritten" because the context shows that this is what Basil means. De Mendieta has collected and analyzed the instances of *agraphos* to show this; see de Mendieta, *The "Unwritten" and "Secret" Apostolic Traditions,* 25–38.

204. *De Sp. S.* 27, 66 (PG 32, 188B); trans. Anderson, 98–99.

205. Basil writes: "*Dogma* is one thing, *kêrygma* another; the first is observed in silence, while the latter is proclaimed to the world. One form of silence is the obscurity found in certain passages of Scripture, which makes the meaning of some dogmas difficult to perceive for the reader's advantage" (*De Sp. S.* 27, 66 [SC 17: 484, 56–60]; trans. Anderson, 100).

the week (namely on Sunday or Lord's day) *(kêrygma)*. But the reason for this (posture) we do not know, at least all of us *(dogma)*."[206] Basil offers more examples, but the point is clear from the parenthetical comments that de Mendieta inserts into his translation: unwritten tradition contains both *kêrygma* and *dogma.*

This would be plain enough, were it not for the fact that other texts yield a different picture wherein *dogma* is one and the same with unwritten tradition. All of the things that de Mendieta has identified as kerygmatic, unwritten tradition are, says Basil, transmitted in fact by unwritten and secret tradition; they are not public. Along these lines the distinction between *kêrygma* and *dogma* is nearly the same as that between Scripture and tradition. Scripture, then, would not contain *dogmata,* and tradition would not contain *kêrygmata.* Indeed, though Basil implies that there can be scriptural *dogma,* he gives no examples.[207] All of the examples of *dogmata* are tied to the liturgy. De Mendieta himself writes that *dogma* is basically the Church's liturgical tradition and the doctrines implied therein, "the whole structure of liturgical and sacramental life, covered and protected at this time by the *disciplina arcani.*"[208] It is easy to forgive the tension between de Mendieta's two works on this matter—one calling unwritten traditions kerygmatic, the other, dogmatic—for he did not introduce it; Basil did that. His letters yield a similar difficulty.[209] In Ep. 125, the confession of faith for Eustathius of Sebaste, he says that the Creed of Nicaea contains saving *dogma.*[210] In Ep. 90, however, Basil exhorts, "let us also pronounce with

206. *De Sp. S.* 27, 66 (PG 32, 189C–192A); trans. de Mendieta, *The "Unwritten" and "Secret" Apostolic Traditions,* 6–8.

207. There may actually be one example. In *De Sp. S.* 27, 66, explaining why we stand for prayer on Sunday, Basil writes that we stand "because Sunday seems to be an image of the age to come. Notice that although Sunday is the beginning of days, Moses does not call it the *first* day, but *one* day: 'And there was evening and there was morning, one day' [Gn 2:8], since this day would recur many times" (trans. Anderson, 100).

208. See de Mendieta, "The Pair," 135.

209. See Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 44.

210. Ep. 125, 1 (Courtonne, 2:32, 42); trans. Deferrari, 2:265. It is possible that Basil's comments here echo the use of *kêrygma* for public but not necessarily understood teaching and *dogma* for the clear understanding of that teaching, for Basil here is dealing with a misunderstanding of the "bare words" or the creed and the proper way to understand them.

boldness that good *kêrygma* of the Fathers, which overwhelms the accursed heresy of Arius, and builds the churches on the sound doctrine, wherein the Son is confessed to be *homoousios* with the Father."[211] Obviously, he is talking about the Creed of Nicaea.

While Basil is unclear on whether *dogmata* are only nonscriptural or also scriptural, he very clearly asserts that *dogmata* are communicated secretly or "mystically" and are understood only by the initiated or by an elite, not by all. The nature of this secrecy and the identity of the elite are related. R. P. C. Hanson thinks that Basil's unwritten tradition is secret and esoteric and thus that the elite who possess them are very much like the Gnostics.[212] Basil has turned Christianity into "a mystery religion or an ecclesiastical freemasonry" so that he could invest his doxological customs and, hence, his theology of the Spirit, with greater authority.[213] Hanson sees Basil as breaking from his own earlier thinking about tradition and from Athanasius and his predecessors. Georges Florovsky sees it differently. He eloquently stresses the liturgical and mystical nature of the transmission rather than its secrecy.[214] Thus, the "'silent' and 'mystical' tradition, 'which has not been made public,' is not an esoteric doctrine, reserved for some particular elite. The 'elite' was the Church."[215] Basil, then, though using peculiar language, has not broken with early Fathers in his thinking about tradition but has perpetuated their insight that Scripture cannot be understood apart from the rule of faith that contained the "credal core" of the Scriptures and epitomized them.[216] De Mendie-

211. Ep. 90, 2 (Courtonne, 1:196, 19–20); trans. Deferrari, 2:127 (altered).

212. See Hanson, "Basil's Doctrine of Tradition," 249–52.

213. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church,* 184, cited in Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 24, n. 15.

214. Florovsky thinks that to render *en mystêriô* (*De Sp. S.* 27, 66) as "in secret" is a "flagrant mistranslation." Florovsky, "The Function of Tradition," 194. De Mendieta disagrees because *mystêriô* is singular and no article is used; see de Mendieta, *The "Unwritten" and "Secret" Apostolic Traditions,* 31 and n. 1. Gribomont sympathizes with Florovsky and judges that de Mendieta has not reckoned with "une certaine contrainte faite aux habitudes de la langue" that the biblical allusion justifies (*en mystêriô* here harkens back to 1 Cor. 2:7) (Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 52–53).

215. Florovsky, "The Function of Tradition," 195.

216. Ibid., 193.

ta proposes a position between Florovsky's and Hanson's. He agrees with Hanson that tradition is secret and not "mystical," but he thinks that this secrecy does not make Basil into a Gnostic.[217] De Mendieta distinguishes three levels of *dogma,* each of which is understood by a particular group. The baptized know customs but not all know what the customs mean. Beyond these two levels is a theologically trained monastic elite who can understand the more profound *dogmata.*[218]

Who, then, is right? When we look at the crucial text (*De Sp. S.* 27, 66) and the examples that Basil gives, we can make the following judgments. Florovsky is right to emphasize the liturgical character of the tradition, but of course not all of the baptized will understand all of the *dogmata.* De Mendieta is right to make distinctions here; some *dogmata* are more profound than others, and some require more education and illumination. Gribomont accentuates Basil's debt here to Origen's Homily 5 on Numbers where he "combines the allusions to the *disciplina arcana,* where initiation involves all the baptized, and those with a superior knowledge, where the initiated are fewer and the doctrinal formulation less definite."[219] As did Origen, Basil sees the spiritual life as having stages.[220]

In addition, Hanson's argument that Basil deviated from his own earlier views and from the larger tradition does not persuade. In *Against Eunomius,* the argument runs that Basil, like Athanasius, "thinks that Scripture is doctrinally sufficient," for he refuses Eunomius' technical language precisely because the words cannot be found in the Scriptures.[221] Basil, then, in his letters uses tradition more flexibly, largely through his realization of the importance of the Nicene Creed.[222] Finally, in *On the Holy Spirit,* Basil forsakes the sufficiency of the Scriptures interpreted by tradition and posits the necessity of a

217. See de Mendieta, "The Pair," 136.

218. Ibid., 136–39. See also Kane, "St. Basil's *On the Holy Spirit,*" 30–33.

219. Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 51.

220. In fact he saw the progression in his own spiritual life. See Ep. 223, 3; trans. Deferrari, 3:299.

221. Hanson, "Basil's Doctrine of Tradition," 244–45.

222. Ibid., 246–48.

secret, ex-scriptural, apostolic tradition. There are a couple of problems with this view of Basil's devolution. First of all, while he refuses Eunomius' nonscriptural technical language, he uses his own. His reprimand of Eunomius is not evidence of a kind of thoroughgoing biblicism that would reject the use of words not found in the Scripture. Eunomius' words are unscriptural more because they contradict the meaning of Scripture than because they cannot materially be found there. Moreover, Basil sees his opponents in *On the Holy Spirit* as contradicting Scripture and himself as following it.[223] Hanson writes that Basil was motivated to make his innovations because "he could not meet Eustathius' demand for a full documentation from Scripture of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit."[224] It is rather that Eustathius could not see the force and meaning, the *dogma,* of the many scriptural proofs that Basil offered, precisely because he rejected the tradition in which the meaning of the Scriptures became patent. And this rejection itself was rather unscriptural. Basil would never have conceded that Eustathius was truer to the Scriptures than he; rather, Eustathius had the words of Scripture but not their sense.

Hanson also accuses Basil of falsely, but not necessarily intentionally, calling his doxology apostolic.[225] He invented a "legend of apostolic origin for rite and custom" that was not justified by the Scriptures, and in his hands "tradition, instead of being left as the word to describe doctrinal development and exploration in continuity with the original Gospel, becomes an historical fiction."[226] Basil's statement, in fact, is quite strong. After tracing his doxology in patristic authors as far back as Irenaeus and Clement,[227] he affirms that all the Church-

223. See *De Sp. S.* 10, 24.

224. Hanson, "Basil's Doctrine of Tradition," 252. Kane, following de Mendieta, holds that Basil so stressed the secrecy of the tradition for rhetorical effect; see Kane, "St. Basil's *On the Holy Spirit,*" 36, and de Mendieta, *The "Unwritten" and "Secret" Apostolic Traditions,* 40.

225. See Hanson, "Basil's Doctrine of Tradition," 252.

226. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church,* 184, cited in de Mendieta, *The "Unwritten" and "Secret" Apostolic Traditions,* x.

227. See *De Sp. S.* 29, 72.

es "from the day when the Gospel was first preached"[228] have welcomed it. What, then, does Basil mean when he says that his doxology is apostolic? Jean Gribomont answers this question.[229] First of all, Basil maintains that it is apostolic—that is, consistent with the wishes and practice of the apostles—to accept unwritten traditions, for Paul commends the Corinthians and the Thessalonians to do so.[230] Secondly, Gribomont points out that Basil is not naïve. He has shown, e.g., in his canonical letters to Amphilochius, that he is "very knowledgeable of the variety and flexibility of customs."[231] Basil "loves to join in one voice 'the Apostles and Fathers'"; thus he expresses the continuity so important to tradition and to his vision of the Church's unity in history.[232] "Apostolic" means consistent with the teaching of the apostles preserved in the Fathers.

While Basil's treatment of Scripture and tradition at times has fed unedifying controversy and polemic, it has also inspired those who follow him to ponder a number of enduring theological questions. At the root of them is the problem of authority: who or what has authority over Christian doctrine? Basil realized that his opponents had focused too narrowly on the authority of the Scriptures. Their demand for explicit scriptural proof for all teachings compromised the integrity of the faith. He tersely summarizes the consequences of their logic: "they either must teach us not to baptize in the manner we have been taught, or else not to believe as we were baptized, or not to glorify as we believe."[233] As did Fathers before him, Basil learned that the Scriptures do not interpret themselves; also like those earlier Fathers, he thought that the rule of faith had a special place here. In the end he realized that the problem of authority in the Church is not a simple one, and tradition itself can be quite complex and varied. It is not as

228. Ibid. 29, 75 (SC 17:209A); trans. Anderson, 112.
229. See Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 54–55.
230. See 1 Cor 11:2 and 2 Thes 2:15.
231. Gribomont, "Esoterisme et Tradition," 54.
232. Ibid., 55.
233. *De Sp. S.* 27, 68 (SC 17:193C); trans. Anderson, 102.

though the Scriptures are obscure but tradition, patent. William Tieck has worked out the Basilian view of authentic tradition. Authentic tradition must be of long usage and of universal ecclesial recognition and, most important of all, must bear "a sense in accord with piety and true faith."[234] Basil's views on tradition and Scripture are far from systematic and comprehensive, yet his writings can help us to sort through the questions of later ages including those of our own time.

Although Basil insisted on the importance of tradition in understanding the Scriptures, he had other ways, too, of dealing with the often self-contradicting biblical text. His Trinitarian exegesis offers excellent examples of a common patristic practice: to interpret a difficult text with a clear one. This principle, however, begs a question: which texts are the clear ones? Texts concerning the Son's inferiority are not problematic for theologians like Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Arius as they are for Athanasius and the Cappadocians. Which texts resonated in Basil's mind? Which, in their plain meaning, reflected his view of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

For all that we find in Basil's homilies on the Psalms and on creation, those homilies are not a treasure trove of *Trinitarian* exegesis. To find such exegesis, we must consider his polemical works, which naturally differ much from sermons.[235] The former are more speculative and less edificatory, but in them he nonetheless labors to explain the true meaning of the scriptural teaching on Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

234. Tieck, "Basil of Caesarea and the Bible," 145.

235. Basil did, on occasion, write polemical sermons (e.g., *Hom.* 24) and his *Hexaemeron* certainly contains polemical elements, though to refute an adversary is not their primary purpose.

CHAPTER 5

Greek 'Paideia' and Scriptural Exegesis in Basil's Trinitarian Theology

THE FATHER AND THE SON

The Second Sophistic

Basil's use of Scripture must be understood in the light of his education; knowing the way in which he was taught to read, write, and argue will help in analyzing his exegesis. He lived at a time of renaissance in Greek literature and culture. This renaissance, called the "Second Sophistic," began in the first century and lasted until the sixth. In general, the writers of the Second Sophistic were nostalgic for the golden age of Greek thought and literature. They labored to preserve and to express in their speeches the values of Hellenic culture. "Their noblest themes . . . were the beauties of Greek religion, mythology, literature, and art; the historical achievements of classical Greece . . . ; the idealism of Greek philosophy, especially that of Plato; the moral excellence of great Greeks of the past; and, taken as a whole, what it meant to be a Greek."[1]

1. Kennedy, *A New History,* 232.

Basil clearly reflects one aspect of this ancient *paideia;* he very often engages in the practice that may be called "authoritative allusion." In many of the instances in which he cites Scripture, Basil is simply citing as his own the words of Scripture. Sometimes these are not really outright quotations, for often Basil does not alert the reader to the fact that the words that he uses are not his own. What is Basil doing here? If he is not quoting directly, what is the point of this practice? We can understand this technique in the light of one of the distinctive features of the Second Sophistic. In the Second Sophistic there was a return to the old, not as old, but as good and true.[2] What B. P. Reardon writes of the second century also applies to the fourth: "Alike in linguistic purism, in the preservation of historical knowledge of the Greek past, in the conscious emulation of earlier writers—*mimesis* in the secondary sense of that term, inadequately translated by 'imitation'—in all these facets of the period, there is among other motives the desire to preserve not what is merely old but what is good."[3]

The practice of authoritative allusion should be understood in the light of the Second Sophistic's imitation of the good and true of the past. Frances Young calls it "intertexuality."[4] She points out that the ancients, with the exception of Quintilian, did not treat allusion or quotation in their works on literary criticism: it was "taken for granted rather than analyzed."[5] Cassius Longinus does, however, describes the importance of emulating great writers:

> Plato shows us, if we are willing to listen, that there is another road to greatness besides those already mentioned. What is this road? It is the emulation and imitation of the great prose writers and poets of the past. This, my dear friend, is an aim we should never abandon. Many a man derives inspiration from another spirit in the same way as the Pythian priestess at Delphi, when she approaches the tripod at the place where there is a cleft in the ground, is said to inhale a divine vapor; thus at once she becomes impregnated with divine power and, suddenly inspired, she utters oracles. So from the genius of the

2. See Reardon, "The Second Sophistic," 35.
3. Ibid., 35–36.
4. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 100.
5. Ibid.

> ancients exhalations flow, as from the sacred clefts, into the minds of those who emulate them, and even those little inclined to inspiration become possessed by the greatness of others.[6]

Quintilian, too, emphasizes the imitation of the classics. He opines that students should not memorize their own words but the words of others, for in this way "they will form an intimate acquaintance with the best writings, will carry their models with them and unconsciously reproduce the style of the speech which has been impressed upon the memory."[7] Quintilian, however, goes a step further by describing the practice of quotation. "They will be in the agreeable position of being able to quote the happy sayings of the various authors, a power which they will find most useful in the courts. For phrases which have not been coined merely to suit the circumstances of the lawsuit of the moment carry greater weight and often win greater praise than if they were our own."[8] The practice of expressing one's thought in the words of a more famous author or a classic text involves more than a display of erudition decorating the expressed thoughts: dressing one's thought in authoritative expressions makes the thoughts themselves carry more weight.

Young's book on biblical exegesis and ancient culture aims at explaining, among other things, the way in which the Bible replaced pagan literary works as the "classic text" at the basis of the formation of culture; Christian use of the Bible as a storehouse of classical expressions certainly makes her point. In one important respect, however, the Bible differs from the pagan works that it replaced. The Bible became a "classic text" not because of any polished literary expression, but because of what it said.[9] Augustine's experience with the Latin Bible parallels that of the Greek speakers. Of his first encounter with the Bible, Augustine said: "[the Scripture] seemed to me unworthy of

6. Longinus, *De sublimitate* 13, 22.
7. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 2, 7, 3–4; trans. Butler, 3:263.
8. Ibid. 2, 7, 4–5; trans. Butler, 3:263.
9. See Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 103.

comparison with the nobility of Cicero's writings. My swelling pride turned away from its humble style, and my sharp gaze did not penetrate into its inner meaning."[10] Not all would have shared Augustine's disdain, but they would, like him, have recognized the Scripture's "lowly entrance." The Greek Fathers, too, "insisted," writes Wolfram Kinzig, "that at the heart of the Christian message lay truth, not stylistic beauty, and that it was precisely this truth in all its simplicity that gave the Christian message its power of persuasion."[11] Basil's words in the *Hexaemeron,* that the Scriptures are "homely in speech,"[12] support Kinzig's judgment. Indeed, Basil makes the rough style of the Scriptures a virtue and the smooth eloquence of the pagans a vice. "We, Christians," Basil declares, "do not follow your subtlety about the artistic selection of words, and we trouble ourselves but little to give them a harmonious disposition. Our writers do not amuse themselves by polishing their periods and chiseling their words. Everywhere, we prefer clear meaning in the words to sonorous and musical expressions."[13] The truth of the Bible presents itself "in simplicity and without any artifice."[14] Kinzig himself cites Basil's words to Libanius, the great pagan orator: the Scriptures are "in substance true, though in style, unlearned."[15] As is turns out, this quotation may be spurious, but it is characterisic of Basil's thought.[16]

Because "the Bible's superiority was a matter of content, not presentation, . . . appeal to its text could never be for the sake of ornamentation, but certainly could be to lend authority to the intent of the discourse."[17] Given his education, it was natural for Basil to use

10. Augustine, *Confessiones* 3, 5, 9; trans. Ryan, 82.

11. Kinzig, "The Greek Christian Writers," 635. Kinzig remarks in the same place that some in fact defended the style of the Bible.

12. *Hex.* 3, 6 (PG 29, 68B); FC 46:47.

13. *Hex.* 6, 2 (PG 29, 120D–21A); trans. de Mendieta, 47. Mendieta's translation here is more animated than Way's but not substantially different.

14. *Hex.* 3, 8 (PG 29, 73B); my trans. See also *Hex.* 1, 10.

15. Ep. 339 (Courtonne, 3:207, 22–23); trans. Deferrari, 4:299.

16. The scholarly review of the authenticity of the correspondence between Basil and Libanius (Ep. 335–59) is mixed. See *Clavis Patrum Graecorum,* §2900.

17. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 103.

the Scriptures in this way. In such cases biblical words adorned the thoughts that he wished to express. Thus expressed, these thoughts became more authoritative, creating in the mind of the reader a consonance between Basil's thoughts and the truth of Scripture.

Basil learned not only how to adorn his words and make them heavy with the weight of Scripture; he also learned the art that some Fathers were all too fond of, polemic. Patristic polemic strikes many moderns as uncharitable and unworthy of the marked holiness that attends the Fathers. There is no doubt that it sometimes was. One might consider what Jerome said upon the death of Rufinus, with whom he had had longstanding grievances: "The scorpion lies beneath the earth between Enceladus and Porphyrion; the many-headed hydra has at last ceased to hiss against me."[18] It would be misguided, though, to dismiss the polemic of the Fathers as vicious, dogmatic ranting. What often offends us is, for the Fathers, literary convention. And it follows that we must know something of the convention of polemic in order to appreciate these works. When it comes to Basil, knowing how he was taught to structure an argument and to argue a position will help one to make sense of his arguments in *Against Eunomius* and to understand the role of the Scriptures in these arguments.

The rhetors of the Second Sophistic, though they composed various sorts of speeches, "claimed as their peculiar province . . . the oratory of pomp and show, the so-called epideictic speeches, in which art was displayed for art's sake."[19] Epideictic rhetoric does not call upon the audience to make a judgment (judicial rhetoric) or to take a certain action (deliberative rhetoric) but rather seeks to praise or blame. The occasions for epideictic speeches are public ceremonies such as festivals or funerals.

Although most of the rhetors of the Second Sophistic were not Christian—some, in fact, were anti-Christian—the movement had a great influence among Christians. While there is scholarly consen-

18. The preface to Book One of Jerome's commentary on Ezechiel; NPNF 2, 6:500.
19. Ameringer, "The Stylistic Influence," 12.

sus on the fact that the Second Sophistic influenced fourth-century Christian authors, precision is lacking concerning the exact nature of the relationship. "Although it is possible," Kinzig writes, "to identify certain lexical and stylistic features in a given author or writing, such as a choice of words and figures of speech and so on, there are as yet no generally accepted models that could help us to describe the precise relationship between the prose of these authors and the strata of language of the period they were writing in."[20] Because the rhetors of the Second Sophistic specialized in the epideictic speech, studies on the influence of the Second Sophistic on Christian authors focus on funeral orations or panegyrics. Though Christian panegyric bears the closest similarity (in form and content) to the epideictic speeches of the Second Sophistic, Christian polemic works also reveal their authors' rhetorical education. Although polemic works cannot be considered typical orations because they were not usually written to be spoken, they are, nonetheless, in some way epideictic. That is to say, such works seek in some measure to be "demonstrative" (or "epideictic") of some point or other. In Christian polemic, one can see the adaptation of received literary forms, and this adaptation occurs because "the rhetorical structure of a writing depends . . . on its genre, purpose, and addressee," all of which change from time to time and author to author.[21]

In the early 350s Basil came under the influence of the Second Sophistic primarily in Athens where he studied with the pagan rhetor Himerius and the Christian rhetor Prohaeresius. Nothing of Prohaeresius' writings survives. He became a rhetor in Athens in the 330s (near the time of Basil's birth) and held that position until his death in 369. Though Prohaeresius was a Christian, he probably did not introduce Christian themes into his speeches. His speeches on historical themes were his most impressive, and upon his death "his fellow sophist Diophantus delivered a funeral oration [that] concluded 'O

20. Kinzig, "The Greek Christian Writers," 647.
21. Ibid.

Marathon and Salamis, now have you been silenced. What a trumpet for your trophies have you lost!'"[22] Himerius, some of whose orations have survived, was much younger than Prohaeresius and taught in Athens from 352 to 361. One of Himerius' better-known orations was delivered on the occasion of a visit to Athens by the governor of Achaea, Hermogenes. Himerius' artistry here was at its best, and George Kennedy says of this oration that it "is to the fourth century after Christ what the poems of Pindar were to the early classical period."[23]

Perhaps the artistry of Himerius can be detected in the writings of Basil.[24] But it is not an analysis of style—of metaphors, rhyme, rhythm, and other literary figures—that will help one understand Basil's use of Scripture. Style *(lexis* or *elocutio)* is only one of the five parts of a well-crafted speech. Of the other parts, memory and delivery are irrelevant here, for Basil's polemic works were not written to be spoken. It is the arrangement *(taxis, diathesis,* or *dispositio)* of the works that is important here. If one can discern how Basil organized his works, then one can determine which of his arguments is the most important or the strongest. Once the central arguments are discovered, the role that the Scriptures play in these arguments can be analyzed.

How, then, was Basil taught to structure an argument and prove a *thesis?* One can discover this, at least in a general way, about Basil's education without recourse to what we may call the "lecture notes" of his principal teachers, Prohaeresius and Himerius. Though ancient education was not standardized in the way that modern education is, handbooks of rhetoric that gained wide circulation were composed throughout the centuries of the Second Sophistic. These handbooks contained *progymnasmata,* that is, "preliminary exercises," that enabled students to begin mastering the rhetorical forms that would aid them in writing and speaking. The *progymnasmata,* writes Kennedy, "were assigned by Greek grammarians to students after they had

22. Kennedy, *A New History,* 245, citing Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers,* 494.
23. Ibid., 247.
24. See Campbell, *The Influence of the Second Sophistic,* 69–72, 88–89, and 91–92.

learned to read and write and as preparation for declamation and were continued in rhetorical schools as written exercises even after declamation had begun."[25] Though there are differences among these handbooks, they all serve to teach through exercises a common rhetorical technique and method of arguing. Michel Patillon articulates the importance of these so-called *progymnasmata:*

> On the one hand, they allow us to describe for ourselves rather precisely the practice of the ancient teacher in this phase of education: one sees in particular how the exercises for the acquisition of forms of elementary discourse (starting from variations on the changing of number and case and on the modes of statement) are distinguished from the similar exercises of the *grammatikos.* One also sees the importance of models, the role of conception, invention, and intuition in the reproduction of models, the exercises and the progression by which the student was led to reproduce them. On the other hand the material that they enter upon is of capital importance.[26]

Only four of these works survive, those by Theon, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus of Myra, and one attributed to, but not written by, Hermogenes. Aphthonius and Nicolaus flourished after Basil's death, but Theon's *progymnasmata* date to the first century and the Hermogenic to the second.[27] Theon's and the Hermogenic *progymnasmata* describe in general the way in which students of rhetoric were taught to argue a point and to defend or refute a position.

How, then, would such a handbook of *progymnasmata* have taught Basil to argue? Two rhetorical forms are of interest here: contradiction *(antirrhêsis)* or refutation *(anaskeuê)* and *thesis.* There was established in ancient education a method by which one undermined another's discourse. Pseudo-Hermogenes advises the following way: "You will refute by argument from what is unclear, implausible, impossible; from the inconsistent, also called the contrary; from what is inappropriate, and from what is not advantageous."[28] Theon advises much the same

25. Kennedy, "Introduction," vi.
26. Patillon, *La théorie du discours,* 9.
27. See Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric,* 56–70.
28. Ps-Hermogenes, *Progymn.* 5, 59.

but adds that the speaker ought to be turned against himself, that is, be proved to hold the opposite of what he is arguing for in his discourse.[29] Basil, indeed, uses these methods in *Against Eunomius.*

But Basil does more than simply refute Eunomius and attack his *Apology;* he offers something positive in place of Eunomius' mistaken teaching. Basil is not satisfied simply to prove Eunomius wrong in his understanding of the Father and the Son but goes on to suggest the correct understanding. In offering an alternative to Eunomius' teaching, Basil is employing the rhetorical form of *thesis. Thesis,* by definition, views a topic generally and not specifically. It does not, to use Ps-Hermogenes' example, investigate whether Pericles should marry, but whether anyone at all should marry.[30] *Thesis,* however, need not be deliberative or practical. The philosophers consider theoretical *theses,* "for example, whether the sky is spherical, whether there are many worlds, whether the sun is made of fire," and, Basil might add, whether the Son is similar to the Father.[31] *Thesis,* moreover, considers not a question on which people agree, but one that is debated.[32] Finally, *thesis* can involve arguments against one position as well as for another. To borrow Ps-Hermogenes' example again, "if we discuss whether one should engage in athletics rather than farm the land [the *thesis*] is double, for it is necessary to dissuade from one pursuit and exhort to the other."[33]

Basil, then, combines these rhetorical forms in *Against Eunomius,* but even their combination has roots in ancient *paideia.* Indeed, the different rhetorical forms practiced in the *progymnasmata* were not intended to remain distinct in discourses.[34] Basil's *Against Eunomius* employs a simple but significant pattern in his use of contradiction, refutation, and *thesis.* First, Basil gives a direct quotation from Eunomius' *Apology;* then he argues against it using one or more of the methods

29. Theon, *Progymn.* 17, 53.
30. See Ps-Hermogenes, *Progymn.* 11, 65.
31. Ibid.
32. See ibid.
33. Ibid.; trans. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata,* 65–66.
34. Ps-Hermogenes gives us a good example of this combination of refutation and thesis in his *On Invention;* see Kennedy, *A New History,* 211–15.

mentioned above; and finally offers an alternative to Eunomius' explanation. Knowledge of this simple structure, repeated and varied by Basil throughout *Against Eunomius,* allows one to understand and evaluate the role of Scripture in his thought. In fact, Basil will quote or allude to the Scriptures at all stages of his argument, whether in his invective against Eunomius' character, in his refutation of Eunomius' arguments, or in the explanation of his own teaching. It is this last use of Scripture that is most relevant for understanding the significance of Scripture in Basil's *theses* on the Father and the Son.

So, then, how Basil was taught to argue a position directs us to consider his *theses* in *Against Eunomius* in order to discover the role of Scripture in his Trinitarian theology. Before the *theses* are considered, though, a word must be said about the ordering of them. *Against Eunomius* contains numerous *theses,* some more important than others, and one must focus on those *theses* that are central to Basil's overall argument. As will be shown soon, Basil arranges his *theses* differently in different parts of *Against Eunomius.* Sometimes he gives a central *thesis* first and, later, supporting ones; other times he arranges supporting *theses* to climax in the central *thesis.* This flexibility of arrangement was consistent with Basil's education. Writing of theoretical *theses,* Theon comments that the student shall "not keep to the same order here as in practical theses but shall compose in whatever way seems best to fit the proposed problem."[35] Basil does exactly this; he arranges the *theses* to suit his overall argument against Eunomius, about which more will be said later.

Basil shared with other Fathers a certain attitude toward the Scriptures. Christopher Hall sums up this attitude: "All agreed that the Bible is an inspired text. All agreed that personal disposition and spiritual health affect one's ability to read Scripture well. All agreed that once the exegete has determined the meaning of a biblical text and plumbed its possible applications, the text's inherent divine authority summons the biblical interpreter to obedience."[36] This was Ba-

35. Theon, *Progymn.* 11, 43.

36. Hall, *Reading Scripture,* 132.

sil's attitude toward the Scriptures, but we can also characterize the way in which he read and used them. He established the text by dividing words *(diorthôsis)* and determined the proper construal by dividing sentences *(anagnôsis)*. He commented upon the style of the text by explaining foreign words, metaphors, archaisms, and etymologies. He made clear the moral point of the text. Basil read the Scriptures in this way because this is how he was taught to read. Basil was taught to write and argue in a certain way, too. He learned to use the words of the Scriptures to adorn his own thoughts and lend authority to them. He learned how to refute a position and offer an explanation of his own. Though he shares these techniques with most other Fathers (in so far as they share a common *paideia*), they will help make clear the role of Scripture in his Trinitarian theology; they will help locate the scriptural center of Basil's understanding of Father and Son.

Scriptural Arguments about the Father and the Son

Basil, in the particular ways in which he cites the Scriptures, reveals to us that there is one scriptural idea that best expresses his theological understanding of the Father and the Son. There is one idea that preeminently makes sense to him, and he uses this idea to interpret those whose meaning he finds less clear and less perspicuous. Maurice Wiles finds such a scriptural center in the Christology of Origen: "the idea that particularly appealed to the mind of Origen was that of Christ as the image of God. It is the central concept he employs in exposition of the person of Christ in his more systematic treatment of the topic."[37] Naturally, Origen would have had a special affinity for Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the unseen God." What, then, is the scriptural idea central to Basil's conception of the Father and the Son? In the words of John 14:9, it is that he who sees the Son sees the Father. This idea plays a key role within the overall theological argu-

37. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle,* 75.

ment that Basil is making, and he uses it to interpret all the crucial Christological texts.

One question naturally arises: if the scriptural center is that particular idea that resonates with and plays a key role in the arguments for Basil's theological understanding of the Father and the Son, which came first, his theological understanding or the scriptural idea? Did Basil arrive at his understanding of Father and Son and then seek out the scriptural text that best expressed it? Or did he come to his understanding of the Father and the Son only after reading the text? These questions are much like that of—forgive the popular analogy—"which came first, the chicken or the egg?" Perhaps these questions are also as fruitless as the popular analogy. In any case, they are as unanswerable. It cannot be shown that the biblical text has an absolute priority for Basil, that his theological understanding is simply an expression of the uninterpreted teaching of the Bible. That the unconditional precedence of the biblical text cannot be demonstrated does not render the Bible insignificant in the thought of Basil.

Three scriptural texts are at the center of Basil's theological understanding of the Father and the Son: John 14:9—"He who has seen me has seen the Father"; Matthew 11:27—"No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him"; and John 17:26—"I [the Son] made known to them thy [the Father's] name." These three texts, it could be said, convey the same scriptural idea. There are other scriptural texts that are important for Basil,[38] but they are not at the center of his thought. Nor is the center of Basil's central idea mentioned in every scriptural argument concerning the Father and the Son. A statistical analysis will show how often Basil uses the central text (or idea) in conjunction with other important Christological passages.

Basil refers to the Son as Image (Col 1:15) ten times in *Against Euno-*

38. Consider, for example, John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word." Basil goes on for some time about the nature of this beginning and the interpretation of "was" *(ên);* see *Con. Eun.* 2, 14–15.

mius and *On the Holy Spirit.*[39] Of these ten, one appears in a list of titles for the Son, and Basil does not consider the meaning of the text.[40] Of the remaining nine instances, only once does Basil cite Colossians 1:15 without also citing or alluding to what I have labeled the scriptural center.

Basil cites Philippians 2:6—"he was in the form of God"—once in *Against Eunomius,* and he cites John 14:9 along with it.[41]

John 6:27—"on him has God the Father set his seal"—appears three times in *Against Eunomius* and *On the Holy Spirit,* each time in association with John 14:9.[42]

Finally, Basil cites Hebrews 1:3—"He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature"—eight times in *Against Eunomius* and *On the Holy Spirit.*[43] Once "reflection"[44] appears in a list of titles with no further explanation.[45] Of the remaining seven instances only two occur without an allusion to, or direct quotation of, John 14:9, Matthew 11:27, or John 17:26.[46]

These statistics, however, only show that John 14:9, Matthew 11:27, and John 17:26 are almost always mentioned when Basil cites other important Christological texts. They do not show that these passages are the scriptural center; they do not reveal which texts interpret and which are interpreted. That must be left to an analysis of the argument of *Against Eunomius.*

There are three basic parts to Basil's argument against Eunomius on the relationship between the Father and the Son. First, Basil establishes that unbegottenness is not the substance of God. Secondly, he

39. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 18; 2, 8; 2, 16; 2, 17; 2, 32; and *De Sp. S.* 6, 15; 7, 16; 9, 23; 18, 47; and 26, 64.

40. See *Con. Eun.* 2, 8. Basil here lists the titles that the Scriptures use of the Son, all to prove against Eunomius that the Son is never called a product *(gennêma).*

41. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 18.

42. See ibid. 1, 18; 2, 16 and *De Sp. S.* 6, 15.

43. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 18; 1, 20; 2, 8; 2, 17; 2, 32 and *De Sp. S.* 6, 15; 7, 16 and 26, 64.

44. The RSV translates *apaugasma* with the verb "reflects."

45. See *Con. Eun.* 2, 8 and n. 43 above.

46. The two passages are *Con. Eun.* 1, 20, wherein Basil explains that Hebrews 1:3 teaches us that Father and Son are *homoousios,* and *De Sp. S.* 7, 16.

establishes the similarity between the Father and the Son. And finally, he explains how divine generation ought to be understood. These three basic arguments are logically connected. The first prepares for the second, and the third strengthens the second. Basil must prove that God's substance is not unbegottenness before he can demonstrate that the begotten is similar in substance to the unbegotten. After establishing the similarity of the Father and the Son, Basil explains what accounts for that similarity—divine generation.

The first part of Basil's argument against Eunomius, that unbegottenness is not the substance of God, begins as many of his arguments begin: he quotes Eunomius directly, points out the silliness or absurdity of what Eunomius writes, offers one or more refutations of Eunomius' position, and then explains his own position. After the direct quotation and the incrimination of Eunomius, Basil builds an argument that culminates in an explanation of the real meaning of unbegottenness. First he shows that the term unbegotten is unscriptural and that Eunomius misuses terms and fails to understand concepts and privation.[47] Basil then prepares for his positive formulation of the meaning of unbegottenness and its relationship to the substance of God. We know, says Basil, that God's substance is beyond human comprehension because even the substance of the earth is beyond us.[48] If the Scriptures do not reveal to us the earth's substance, how could it reveal the divine substance? "Unbegotten" does not tell us *what* God is but *how* he is, viz., without beginning.

At one point in his argument that unbegottenness is not identical with God's substance, Basil anticipates what he will later explain in greater detail. After demonstrating that God's substance is beyond the comprehension of any rational creature, he explains that comprehension of the divine substance is reserved to the Son and the Spirit. It is interesting to note that Basil cites here Matthew 11:27—"No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son

47. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 5–10.
48. See ibid. 1, 12.

and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him"—and 1 Corinthians 2:10–11—"the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." These two texts are not central to Basil's argument that unbegottenness is not the substance of God. The centrality of these scriptural ideas will be taken up presently; suffice it to say here that of the many texts that show the relationship of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, Basil chose these and only these.

The second and more important of Basil's arguments against Eunomius is the demonstration of the similarity of the Father and the Son. To understand the role that Scripture plays in this argument is to understand, by and large, its significance in Basil's understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son. The larger structure of the discourse serves as the context for the heart of the argument. First, Basil's overarching argument for the similarity of the Father and the Son breaks down into smaller arguments. This is consistent with the way in which he structures other parts of the work. Moreover, Basil follows the same pattern in these subarguments: he quotes Eunomius directly, ridicules the boldness and perversity of his thought, intelligently criticizes his thought, and offers an alternative explanation of the matter at hand. Secondly, Basil logically orders the subarguments in a particular way. Earlier Basil arranged the subarguments in such a way that they culminated in his main point. In this argument for the similarity of the Father and the Son, however, Basil first offers his understanding (of course, in response to a position of Eunomius) and then defends it against Eunomius' objections (for example, that such a similarity violates divine simplicity).

How, then, does Basil use Scripture in his central argument for the similarity of the Father and the Son and in the supporting arguments?

Eunomius had argued that there could be no comparison or communion between the Father and the Son.[49] In response, Basil artic-

49. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.* 9.

ulated his basic understanding of the communion of the Father and the Son. He cited John 14:9 and went on to ask how the Son can show forth the Father in himself if he bears no comparison with the Father.[50] The unknown is not perceived with the help of something dissimilar and foreign; rather, kin is known from kin.[51] Basil illustrates his point with a patchwork of scriptural allusions: "Thus, in the imprint of the seal the character of the one being modeled is seen; but through the image comes knowledge of the archetype as we examine the same thing in each."[52] This passage echoes several scriptural passages that Basil goes on to quote. He cites John 6:27, "On him has God the Father set his seal"; Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God"; Philippians 2:6, "He was in the form of God"; and, for the second time in this chapter, John 14:9, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." But John 14:9 is not, here, just as one among many texts that Basil cites. Rather, it makes sense of the other texts. It expresses Basil's basic understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and through it the other texts are given their theological meaning. The Son is in the form of God, he is the image of God, and he bears the seal of the Father because in him the Father is seen and known. Because of this epistemic role, the Son must have communion with the Father. When Eunomius strikes down the communion between Father and Son, he strikes down "the way of knowledge which the Son is in himself. Everything which the Father has is mine, says the Lord."[53] Basil cites another passage from John: "For the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (Jn 5:26). Incorporating still another key Christological text, Basil states that the Son cannot be image or "effulgence" or "imprint of the substance" (Heb 1:3), if he does not share communion with the Father, for, if the Father cannot communicate or make known his nature, he cannot have an image or an effulgence.[54]

In an argument supporting the main point that the Son is humani-

50. *Con. Eun.* 1, 17 (SC 299:234, 26–28).
51. Ibid. (SC 299:234, 28–30).
52. Ibid. (SC 299:234, 31–34).
53. Ibid. 1, 18 (SC 299:236, 16–19).
54. Ibid. (SC 299:236, 25–238, 29).

ty's way to knowledge of the Father (and therefore the Son must have communion with the Father), Basil maintains that in his attempts to exalt the Father, Eunomius has, in fact, dishonored him and at the same time denied us knowledge of God. Against Eunomius' exalting of the Father at the expense of the Son, Basil cites John 5:23, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" and Luke 10:16, "He who rejects me rejects him who sent me." Basil immediately elaborates on the consequence of this dishonoring and rejecting of the Son: Eunomius has deprived himself of the knowledge of the way that leads to the Father.[55] After all, writes Basil, "although both the Jews think to believe in God and certain of the Greeks listen to those who say something great about God, but at the same time someone could not say that they praise God without faith in Christ, through whom is the access to knowledge."[56] Even though Basil does not cite John 14:9 here, the thought that Basil expresses is the same: the Son gives us knowledge of the Father.

In another supporting argument, Basil uses the same idea ("He who has seen me has seen the Father") to explain Psalm 35:10, "In your light we see light"; and John 1:9, "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world." Basil employs an analogy to draw out the meaning of these texts and their epistemic significance. He writes: "And moreover, would it not seem to someone reasonable that the following is true? Just like the eye passing over illuminated places is necessarily checked by an absence of the energy of light, likewise also the mind is forced outside of being to appearances when a certain light of truth is left behind; and devoid of intelligence and confused, the mind desists from thought."[57] The light of the mind is the Only-begotten, and the soul that turns away from him cannot know the Father.[58]

In a very interesting piece of exegesis, Basil connects Exodus 3:14 ("I am who am") with the saints' knowledge of God the Father in his Son. Basil's argument here is more complex than simply ascribing Ex-

55. Ibid. 1, 26 (SC 299:266, 31–37).
56. Ibid. (SC 299:266: 37–41).
57. Ibid. 2, 16 (SC 305:60, 1–7).
58. Ibid. (SC 305:60, 7–62, 10). See also ibid. (SC 305:62, 18–19).

odus 3:14 to the Son. Because those words, "I am who am," were spoken by the angel of the Lord, Basil points out that the Scriptures call our Lord both "angel" and "God" and that such instances refer to the Only-begotten. After saying that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, the Scriptures add words spoken by God: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham" (Ex 3:6).[59] This angel and God Basil identifies with the "angel of great counsel" of Isaiah 9:5 and with the angel who appeared in a vision to Jacob saying: "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me" (Gn 31:13).[60] The Scriptures use "angel" and "God" in the context of revelations—whether to Moses or to Jacob. From this, Basil is certain that such texts refer to the Only-begotten, God the Word, who manifests himself to us generation after generation announcing the will of the Father to the saints.[61] Identifying the angel of the Lord with the Only-begotten, Basil interprets many passages of the Old Testament as affirming the Son's eternity and divinity. This Old Testament witness predates any authority that Eunomius claims to be following.

By predicating nonexistence of the Son, by denying that Exodus 3:14 refers to the Son, Eunomius makes him an idol, not truly God. According to Basil, Paul calls the Gentiles "those who are not" (see 1 Cor 1:28) because they lack knowledge of the true God.[62] Fittingly, people who do not exist, worship gods who do not exist—Paul, Jeremiah, and Esther all speak of false gods as those "who do not exist."[63] Thus, Basil writes: "Since God is both truth and life (see Jn 14:6), those who have not been united with God in faith, those who are living in the nonexistence of the lie by going astray with idols, are reasonably called, I think, those who do not exist, because of their lack of truth and estrangement from life."[64] It makes perfect sense, then, when Paul addresses his letter to the Ephesians in the following way: "To the saints who are and who have faith in Christ" (Eph 1:1).[65] This scriptural argu-

59. See ibid. 2, 18 (SC 305:72, 22–24).
60. See ibid. (SC 305:72, 31–74, 40).
61. See ibid. (SC 305:74, 42–45).
62. Ibid. 2, 19 (SC 305:76, 19–22).
63. Ibid. (SC 305:76, 13–17).
64. Ibid. (SC 305:76, 22–27).
65. Ibid. 2, 19 (SC 305:76, 27). On Basil's manuscript of Ephesians, see Sesboüé, *Contre*

ment leads to Basil's point of contention with Eunomius. Because of what it means to predicate nonexistence of God—namely that God so called is no god at all—when Eunomius says that the Son was not before he was begotten, he makes the Son a false god.[66]

So then, the central idea behind John 14:9, Matthew 11:27, and John 17:26 plays a key role not only in Basil's central argument for the similarity of the Father and the Son but also in his supporting arguments.

The third and final part of Basil's overarching argument against Eunomius is his explanation of divine generation.[67] The centerpiece of Basil's explanation of divine generation is John 14:9. Basil uses a cluster of scriptural texts to describe what takes place in divine generation. Behind these texts is the idea of John 14:9, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."

Basil and Eunomius agree that our thought about God must be stripped of corporeal and material connotations. This is especially true of divine generation. We should think, writes Basil, "of a generation worthy of God, without passion, parts, division, and time."[68] This is what divine generation is not; but what does it denote positively?[69] Basil explains that in divine generation the image of the invisible God cannot be achieved as our artificial images are.[70] Rather, the image "exists along with and has subsisted with him who sustains it, and it exists by means of the archetype that exists. The image is not formed through imitation, but the whole nature of the Father is stamped in the Son as in a certain seal" (cf. Jn 6:27).[71] Basil then offers the analo-

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Eunome, 2:76–77, n. 1. The *textus receptus* reads: *tois hagiois tois ousin* [*en Ephesô*]. The RSV has Basil's text but translates it with a different sense: "To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus."

66. *Con. Eun.* 2, 19 (SC 305:76, 32–78, 35).

67. See ibid. 2, 11–19, and 2, 22–31.

68. Ibid. 2, 16 (SC 305:64, 30–31).

69. A little later in *Contra Eunomium,* Basil explicitly defines Father and Son. His definition there is no different from the account treated here; in the later account Basil does not invoke the Scriptures. Ibid. 2, 22 (SC 305:92, 49–51).

70. Ibid. 2, 16 (SC 305:64, 33–35).

71. Ibid. (SC 305:64, 35–38).

gies of knowledge passing from teacher to student and the birth of thoughts that coexist with the movement of the mind; of course in each analogy there can be no hint of temporality.[72]

In a very important text, Basil explains the generation of the Son with allusions to key Christological Scriptures, and all of these point to the teaching of John 14:9. Basil writes: "The image [see 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15] has been seen and is the begotten Son and the resplendence of the glory of God [see Heb 1:3], and wisdom [see 1 Cor 1:24, 30], and power [see 1 Cor 1:24], and justice of God [see 1 Cor 1:30]. He is an image not as a possession or as a tendency but as living and active substance and as the resplendence of the glory of God. Therefore, he wholly shows in himself the Father [see Jn 14:9]; he shines forth from the whole glory of him."[73] Thus, John 14:9 is not only the scriptural text by which Basil understands most other Christological texts, but it is also at the center of his understanding of divine generation itself. To say that the Father begets the Son is to say that the Father makes himself seen in the Son, completely, eternally, and immaterially.

There is a variation on Basil's epistemic argument for the equality of the Son with the Father that ought to be considered. Basil explains that we contemplate the power of the Son in the Spirit and that of the Father in the Son.[74] The Son, Basil argues, cannot be a work of creation because works show forth the power and wisdom but not the substance of their creator.[75] But in God substance and power coincide because he is simple.[76] As a result, "the power of the Father moves wholly into the generation of the Son and on the other hand again the power of the Only-begotten moves wholly into the subsistence *(hypos-*

72. Ibid. (SC 305:64, 38–45).

73. Ibid. 2, 17 (SC 305:66, 5–11). Although Basil does not here explicitly cite John 14:9, he clearly refers to its meaning. Sesboüé comments on this passage: "Allusion à la formule johannique: 'Qui m'a vu a vu le Père' (*Jn.* 14, 9), mais sans contact littéraire" (Sesboüé, *Contre Eunome,* 2:67, n. 1).

74. I focus here on *Contra Eunomium* 2, 32. See also ibid. 1, 23, wherein Basil speaks of the Son receiving the similitude of the Father which is why the Son is called the power of God (see 1 Cor 1:24) (SC 299:254, 20–23).

75. *Con. Eun.* 2, 32 (SC 305:132, 9–134, 18).

76. Ibid. (SC 305:134, 18–20).

tasis) of the Holy Spirit. It would follow that the power and the substance *(ousia)* of the Only-begotten would be contemplated from the Holy Spirit, and again the power and substance *(ousia)* of the Father would be comprehended from the Son."[77] Thus, because of divine simplicity, the Son is our way to knowledge not only of the Father's substance, but also of his power. He who has seen the Son has seen the power of the Father.

Conclusion

The thesis of this chapter can be very simply stated: the scriptural idea behind John 14:9, Matthew 11:27, and John 17:26 is at the center of Basil's understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son. But this simple conclusion presupposes a different way of viewing Basil's interpretation of Scripture. Basil's use of Scripture in *Against Eunomius* cannot be classified according to the usual categories; it is distinctively neither Alexandrian nor Antiochene. It is more useful to approach Basil's method of interpretation with some basic questions in mind: What scriptural text or idea is the most important to, and the most basic for, Basil? Is there one text that he uses to interpret other Christological texts? Is there a particular text or idea that resonates in Basil's mind, that perfectly expresses and confirms his theological understanding of the Father and the Son? The idea behind "he who has seen me has seen the Father" is at the center of Basil's understanding of the Father and the Son because it is at the center of the most important argument against Eunomius: that the Son has communion with the Father. Moreover, this central scriptural idea sheds light on human knowledge of God, divine generation, and divine power.

Certain aspects of Basil's education applied to the text of *Against Eunomius* illuminates how he structures his work both in the force of his overall argument as well as in the many subarguments that make it

77. Ibid. (SC 305:134, 21–26).

up. His argument proceeds from a direct quotation and refutation of Eunomius (in any number of the ways available to students of the ancient world) to the offering of his own *thesis,* his own explanation of whatever it is that Eunomius had gotten wrong. It is in the study of the arrangement of Basil's *theses* and of the use of Scripture therein that one discovers the scriptural idea central to his understanding of the Father and the Son.

The scriptural idea expressed by John 14:9 and other texts explains human knowledge of God. If the Son is less than the Father, then we cannot know God. If the Son is less than the Father, then we are reduced to idolatry, for we would then worship and know only him who is less than God. So, the Son must be equal to the Father if we are to know God. On the other hand, John 14:9 perfectly accords with Basil's theological insight into the fact that divine knowledge—if it is to be had at all—must be mediated. "He who has seen me has seen the Father" expresses positively what Matthew 11:27 does so negatively: "No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

The Son is a mediator in the order of knowing; he is also a mediator in the order of doing. The power of the Father moves wholly into the Son so that we can recognize the Father's power only in perceiving the Son's.

Finally, the central scriptural idea expresses for Basil the meaning of divine generation; it explains what it means to say that God has a Son after all corporeal and material connotations have been stripped from the idea of generation. Bodiless, passionless, and timeless generation is akin to knowledge passing from teacher to student or the birth of a thought. In short, to be a son of such a generation is to be an image. But John 14:9 determines what sort of image divine generation produces. The Son is the sort of image that "wholly shows in himself the Father."[78] Such an image cannot be a subordinate "possession," but

78. Ibid. 2, 17 (SC 305: 66, 5–11).

must be a "living and active substance."[79] The Son must be this kind of image if he makes known the Father, if the Father is seen in him.

As Basil employed a fundamental scriptural idea to articulate his understanding of the Father and Son, so he does with the Holy Spirit without whom "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord'" (1 Cor 12:3). We will see next that Basil's theology of the Spirit and his understanding of the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son are likewise founded upon the Scriptures.

79. Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

Greek 'Paideia' and Scriptural Exegesis in Basil's Trinitarian Theology

THE HOLY SPIRIT

As Basil posits one scriptural idea concerning the Son in whose light other texts find meaning, so there is one scriptural idea that forms the cornerstone of Basil's theology of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3 best expresses how Basil understands the Spirit: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit."[1]

Basil's pneumatology cannot be understood, however, apart from his thoughts on salvation and baptism, which themselves are bound together. The movement in Basil's thought, then, is from the economic to the immanent Trinity, from the Spirit's activity in salvation and baptism to the nature of his being and his relationship with the Father

1. As Basil is very concerned about prepositions, I translate 1 Corinthians 12:3 *(en pneumati hagiô)* literally—"in the Holy Spirit" rather than "by the Holy Spirit." Anderson translates it "through the Holy Spirit" most of the time, but he is easily forgiven that, for Basil understands 1 Corinthians 2:10 (where Paul uses *dia pneumatos*) to have the same force as *en pneumatos* (see *De Sp. S.* 16, 38), and this in spite of the fact that a little later he insists on the importance of "in" in 1 Corinthians 12:3. About this verse, Basil remarks, "Notice that it does not say *through* the Spirit, but *in* the Spirit" (*De Sp. S.* 18, 47 [PG 32, 153B]; trans. Anderson, 74).

and the Son. Basil uses two different prepositions to distinguish the economic from the immanent Trinity as it concerns the Holy Spirit. "When we consider," writes Basil, "the Spirit's *rank,* we think of Him as present *with* the Father and the Son, but when we consider the working of His grace on its recipients, we say that the Spirit is *in* us."[2] Though he writes of the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son, the Spirit in the economy of salvation clearly dominates Basil's treatment of the Holy Spirit. It will be no surprise, then, that the scriptural center of Basil's pneumatology is concerned with the economy of salvation rather than the inner life of the Trinity. Basil's thoughts on the economy of salvation and baptism form the context of his theology of the Spirit.

Basil is deeply indebted to Greek thought for his understanding of salvation. Thus, Basil Hellenizes salvation. For some, this Hellenization would indeed compromise both salvation itself and the Gospel that announces this salvation. Others speak of the Hellenization of Christianity differently. In fact, from this point of view the Gospel is not Hellenized, but Greek thought is baptized. Or, to repeat a commonly used image, Greek thought is the spoils of Egypt used in the service of the Gospel. Whether or not and to what extent Basil's Hellenistic view of salvation accords with the Gospel does not change the fact that his pneumatology cannot be understood apart from his soteriology.

Hints of Basil's soteriology may be found scattered throughout *On the Holy Spirit,* but one need not patch together a complete picture from these pieces, for Basil himself gives us a full description. For Basil, salvation is knowledge. Furthermore, this knowledge includes and presupposes moral righteousness. Basil, unlike Augustine, for example, does not focus on the torn will, unable to make good on the knowledge of what is right and wrong. Rather, for Basil, moral impurity is attributed to ignorance so that when the ignorance is cured, moral purity is restored. That moral integrity and knowledge are connected,

2. *De Sp. S.* 26, 63 (PG 32, 53B); trans. Anderson, 96.

Basil shows by moving from the image of the school of righteousness that "attempts to bring us to perfection by first teaching us easy, elementary lessons suited for out limited intelligence"[3] to a direct allusion to the cave which Plato uses in Book Seven of the *Republic* as an analogy for the mind being led out of ignorance.[4] Basil writes: "Then God, who provides us with every good thing, leads us to the truth, by gradually accustoming our darkened eyes to its great light. In the deep riches of his wisdom and the unsearchable judgments of His intelligence, He spares our weakness, and prescribes a gentle treatment. He knows our eyes are accustomed to dim shadows, so He uses these at first. Then he shows us the sun's reflection in water, so to spare us from being blinded by its pure light."[5] Basil reveals more clearly his thinking here when he writes that a "a carnal man's mind is not trained in contemplation but remains buried in the mud of fleshy lusts, powerless to look up and see the spiritual light of the truth."[6] So for Basil, salvation is a salvation from sin unto righteousness but only as a corollary and prerequisite to salvation from ignorance unto wisdom.

Basil does not leave his allusion to Plato without applying these Hellenistic truths to Christianity. The whole economy of salvation, from the Old Testament to the New, is viewed in terms of God gradually leading his people from darkness to light. The law and the prophets serve as a reflection or shadow whereby God dimmed the light that he is for the purpose of training the "eyes of our hearts," making them able to look upon the "secret and hidden wisdom of God."[7] So, Basil does not merely reproduce a Greek philosophical view of the problems of human ignorance and sin and the solutions to these problems. Rather, he uses Greek ideas to express a Christian solution to the problems of ignorance and sin.

Basil's view of salvation is intimately linked with his understanding

3. Ibid. 14, 33 (PG 32, 27E); trans. Anderson, 56.
4. See Plato, *Republic,* 514A–17C.
5. *De Sp. S.* 14, 33 (PG 32, 27E–28A); trans. Anderson, 56.
6. Ibid. 22, 53 (PG 32, 46A); trans. Anderson, 84.
7. See ibid. 14, 33 (PG 32, 28A); trans. Anderson, 56.

of the Holy Spirit but through the sacrament of baptism. Baptism, as Basil has it, is best understood as an imitation of Christ.[8] Christ shows humanity what it must do to receive salvation, what it is that must be done in order to be rid of the fleshly and sinful darkness of ignorance and to receive knowledge and illumination. So in imitation of Christ one must not only be meek, humble, and long suffering, one must also die if one is to rise to life.[9] But, Basil asks, "How can we become like him in his death?"[10] Baptism is the answer; by it we are buried with him.[11] Basil goes on to explain the meaning of this burial and what it profits a person. Burial means "that the old way of life be terminated, and this is impossible unless a man is born again [see Jn 3:3]."[12] The old way of life must be terminated if a new one is to begin.[13] Basil uses this analogy: "When a runner has to run around the post at the end of the race track in order to return on the other side of the course, he has to stop and pause momentarily, in order to negotiate such a sharp turn."[14] Basil reasons that if we wish to change our lives, a kind of death must come between the old life and the new.[15]

Baptism is the death of the life of sin and the beginning of divine illumination. It "signifies the putting off of the works of the flesh . . . [, and] the filth which has grown on the soul by the working of a carnal mind is washed away."[16] In baptism, water brings about death, and the Spirit, life; and this new life is one of knowledge and truth. Baptism comprises three immersions and three invocations "so that the image of death might be completely formed, and the newly-baptized might have their souls enlightened with divine knowledge."[17] After baptism accomplishes all this in a person, the work of salvation is by no means over. Christians must live the "resurrected life," as Basil calls it, once

8. Basil also wrote a homily on baptism; see *Basile de Césarée,* SC 357.
9. See *De Sp. S.* 15, 35 (PG 32, 28D–E).
10. Ibid. (PG 32, 28E); trans. Anderson, 57.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.; trans. Anderson, 58.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. (PG 32, 29A); trans. Anderson, 58.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid. (PG 32, 29A–B); trans. Anderson, 58.
17. Ibid. (PG 32, 29D); trans. Anderson, 59.

they are raised from the dead. The Lord himself spells out the virtues of the resurrected life: "Gentleness, endurance, freedom from the defiling love of pleasure, and from covetousness."[18] Christians are to "acquire in this life the qualities of the life to come."[19]

But baptism cannot save unless faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit accompanies it. Let us follow Basil's logic here: "What makes us Christians? 'Our faith,' everyone would answer. How are we saved? Obviously through the regenerating grace of baptism. How else could we be? We are confirmed in our understanding that salvation comes through Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. . . . If we now reject what we accepted at baptism, we will be found to be farther away from our salvation than when we first believed."[20] A baptism void of this confession is invalid and benefits no one.[21] Baptism is supposed to deliver from idols those who receive it and to bring them before God.[22] But baptism without the tripartite confession does not lead to light or to divine knowledge.[23] On the relationship between faith and baptism, Basil writes that they "are two inseparably united means of salvation. Faith is perfected through baptism; the foundation of baptism is faith, and both are fulfilled through the same names."[24] Or again, "the profession of faith leads us to salvation, and then baptism follows, sealing our affirmation."[25]

Indeed, Basil binds very closely baptism, salvation, and faith. Faith is the beginning of salvation for it is the beginning of knowledge of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But faith must be confirmed by baptism. Saving knowledge comes only with the death of the life of the flesh, which the water of baptism accomplishes, and the new life given by the Spirit in baptism.[26]

18. Ibid. (PG 32, 29E); trans. Anderson, 59.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid. 10, 26 (PG 32, 21E–22A); trans. Anderson, 46.
21. Ibid. (PG 32, 22A).
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid. (PG 32, 22A–B).
24. Ibid. 12, 28 (PG 32, 24A); trans. Anderson, 49–50.
25. Ibid. (PG 32, 24A); trans. Anderson, 50.
26. Ibid. 15, 35 (PG 32, 29C).

So, what does all of this have to do with the scriptural center of Basil's pneumatology? Saving knowledge cannot be had apart from the baptismal formula. Of course, then, saving knowledge cannot be had if the Spirit is left out of the confession. But why? Why can we not be baptized in the Father alone? After all, he is divine, and knowledge of him is knowledge of God. The previous chapter answers this question. We cannot be baptized in the Father alone because we cannot know or see the Father without the Son (Jn 14:9). Why, then, can we not be baptized only in the Father and the Son, with the Son mediating to us the knowledge of the Father? The reason is that, just as the Son is the mediator without whom one cannot have access to the Father, so, too, the Spirit is the mediator without whom one cannot have access to the Son. In the words of Scripture, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). This verse and the idea behind it are quite significant in Basil's theology.

Basil's arguments for the divinity of the Holy Spirit are rather simple; he argues from what the Spirit *does* to what he *is*. Basil presses many a scriptural passage into the service of this line of thinking. There is one scriptural idea, however, that captures for Basil the essence of the relationship between the Spirit and the Father and the Son. As many of Basil's arguments go, the Spirit is divine because he is illuminator, sanctifier, and ruler. But the Holy Spirit cannot perform these divine activities unless he is joined to the Father and Son, or rather to the Father through the Son. The thought expressed by 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 12:10, as well as by other texts, makes clear not only that the Son and the Spirit are joined but also how they are joined: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." Just as Basil explains the role of the Son in largely epistemic terms ("He who has seen me has seen the Father" [Jn 14:9]), so also does he explain the role of the Holy Spirit. No one can have sanctifying knowledge, no one can confess the Son, without the Spirit. Not only does this explain the Spirit's relationship to the Father and the Son, it also forms one of Basil's most powerful arguments for the Spirit's divinity; the Spirit is divine, because he epistemically unites the baptized to the Father through the Son. It is be-

cause he does this that he can be called illuminator, sanctifier, and ruler.

Just as the structure of *Against Eunomius* becomes clear when viewed in the light of Basil's education, so, too, is the structure of the argument of *On the Holy Spirit* illuminated by the knowledge of how Basil was taught to make an argument. On the one hand, the overall structure of *On the Holy Spirit* differs from that of *Against Eunomius,* which stands to reason since authors of the time were accorded great freedom in the arrangement of works.[27] On the other hand, Basil uses the same rhetorical forms in *On the Holy Spirit* that he did in *Against Eunomius,* viz., contradiction *(antirrhêsis)* or refutation *(anaskeuê)* and *thesis.* An analysis of the overall structure of *On the Holy Spirit* will disclose the crucial parts of Basil's argument.

Three main parts can be distinguished in Basil's *On the Holy Spirit.* The first and last parts are what we may call treatises on prepositions. Basil here uses the methods that his education afforded him to show that the Scriptures do not use language (in this case, prepositions) in the rather strict way in which the Eunomians do. There are no laws governing the use of prepositions in the Bible whereby one preposition may be said to be used of the Father alone, another of the Son alone, and still another of the Spirit alone. Moreover, it is not by a single preposition that the Scriptures express the relations among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Throughout these parts of *On the Holy Spirit* that are dominated by the rhetorical forms contradiction and refutation, Basil makes much use of the Scriptures. But his use of the Scriptures in this instance does not illuminate its significance for his thought on the Holy Spirit because he does not here offer an alternative understanding of the Spirit; that is, he does not offer his own *thesis.* Though Basil's point in the first and last parts of the work is well made and well taken, the truly interesting part of *On the Holy Spirit* is the second part wherein Basil considers the Holy Spirit himself, apart from the use of prepositions.

The second part of *On the Holy Spirit* is as carefully structured as

27. See Theon, *Progymn.* 11, 43.

the first: Basil alternates between *thesis* and refutation. In the first *thesis* (9, 22–23), Basil "examine[s] what kinds of ideas about the Spirit we hold in common, as well as those which we have gathered from the Scriptures, or received from the unwritten tradition of the Fathers."[28] This *thesis* is followed by an extended refutation of false ideas concerning the Holy Spirit (10, 24–15, 36).[29] Next comes the second *thesis* (16, 37–40). Basil himself signals the change of rhetorical form. "Let us return," he writes, "to the point we first raised: that in everything the Holy Spirit is indivisibly and inseparably joined to the Father and the Son."[30] There follows, then, a second refutation of still more false ideas (17, 41–20, 51).[31] Finally comes the third *thesis* (21, 52–24, 57). Basil again signals the change in the discourse. He writes: "Why fight with such trifling arguments, and win such a shameful victory, when we can indisputably prove the excellence of the Spirit's glory? If we repeat what we have learned from Scripture, every one of these Spirit-fighters (Pneumatomachoi) will raise a loud and vehement outcry, stop their ears, pick up stones or any other weapon at hand, and charge against us. But we must care about truth, not our own safety."[32] Such is the structure of the middle part, the heart of *On the Holy Spirit.* Basil offers three *theses* on the Holy Spirit, each separated from the next by an extended refutation of false ideas on the Spirit. As is his custom, Basil will also formulate an alternative explanation to a position that he is refuting—we may call these "subtheses." It is in these three major *theses* and in certain subtheses that Basil offers his own explanation of the nature of the Holy Spirit and the relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. The role of the Scriptures in these *theses* and subtheses, therefore, will shed light on the role of the Scriptures in Basil's theological understanding of the Holy Spirit.

28. *De Sp. S.* 9, 22; trans. Anderson, 42.

29. Basil makes the transition in rhetorical form between this first *thesis* and the following refutation very clear when he writes: "but now we must attempt to refute our opponents' false ideas which have been directed against us" (ibid. 9, 23; trans. Anderson, 44).

30. Ibid. 16, 37; trans. Anderson, 60.

31. Basil signals the end of the second *thesis* (and the beginning of the second refutation) by saying "concerning this I have said enough" (ibid. 16, 40; trans. Anderson, 67).

32. Ibid. 21, 52; trans. Anderson, 81.

Basil's first *thesis* (9, 22–23) on the Holy Spirit can be divided into two parts: a meditation on the meaning of the title "spirit" and a consideration of the Spirit in the economy of salvation, that is, the Spirit's relationship with humanity and with the Father and the Son in the order of salvation. In the first part of this *thesis*, the meditation on the meaning of "spirit," Basil draws upon many Scriptures to show that the Holy Spirit is the sort of being who cannot be circumscribed; who is not subject to change; who is limitless in power, intelligence, and goodness; who is beyond time; who is the source of holiness, perfection, and illumination; and who is simple, distributing himself but remaining whole.[33] What Basil writes here helps us to understand how he conceives of the Holy Spirit as Spirit; at this point, he intimates the Spirit's role in salvation, but he does not elaborate the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son. This he does in the second part of the *thesis*.

As was mentioned above, for Basil, a person must be morally cleansed before the Spirit can abide within. As Basil writes, "the Spirit comes to us when we withdraw ourselves from evil passions, which have crept into the soul through its friendship with the flesh, alienating us from a close relationship with God."[34] But once this cleansing is done, the human soul enters a relationship with the Spirit and thereby with the Father and the Son. "Then," writes Basil, "like the sun, He [the Paraclete] will show you in Himself the image of the invisible, and with purified eyes you will see in this blessed image the unspeakable beauty of its prototype."[35] That is to say, in the Spirit, we have knowledge of the Son, and in the Son, knowledge of the Father. Basil does not cite the Scriptures at all in this passage, but this idea of the Spirit's epistemic role is central to Basil's understanding of the Spirit, and he will enlist the support of the Scriptures for this idea later in *On the Holy Spirit*.

In Basil's second *thesis* (16, 37–40), he tries to establish the Spirit's communion with the Father and the Son by considering the creation

33. See ibid. 9, 22 (PG 32, 19C–20A); trans. Anderson, 42–44.
34. Ibid. 9, 23 (PG, 20A); trans. Anderson, 44.
35. Ibid. (PG 32, 20B); trans. Anderson, 44.

of angels. "When you consider creation," Basil writes, "I advise you to first think of Him who is the first cause of everything that exists, namely, the Father, and then of the Son, who is the creator, and then the Holy Spirit, the perfector."[36] According to Basil, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each has a distinctive role in creation: the Father commands, the Son creates, and the Spirit sanctifies.[37] Even though angels "are not gradually perfected, but are immediately perfect from the moment of their creation,"[38] they are not created in such a way that they have holiness by nature; rather it is the Holy Spirit who makes them holy.[39] In fact, if the divinity of the Holy Spirit is denied, then, too, is the very holiness of the angels. Here Basil argues from the Scriptures: "If we agree that the Spirit is subordinate, then the choirs of angels are destroyed, the ranks of archangels are abolished, and everything is thrown into confusion, since their life loses all law, order, or boundary. How can the angels cry "Glory to God in the highest" [Ps 103:4], unless the Spirit enables them to do so? "No one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, 'Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit [1 Cor 12:3]."[40] Basil continues the argument. The Spirit gave Gabriel foreknowledge (see Lk 1:11, 26–36).[41] The Spirit gave wisdom to the angel who interpreted Daniel's vision (see Dn 9:22–27; 10:10ff.).[42] Because only the Spirit reveals mysteries (see 1 Cor 2:10), angels cannot experience the blessed life of beholding the face of the Father without him (see Col 1:16).[43] "One cannot see the Father without the Spirit!"[44] Here again Basil combines holiness with spiritual sight. To be holy is to behold the Father in the Spirit.[45] Basil cites 1 Corinthians 12:3 in the course of his scriptural argument for

36. Ibid. 16, 38 (PG 32, 31E); trans. Anderson, 62. On the creation of angels, see Luislampe, *Spiritus Vivificans,* 107–14.
37. See ibid. (PG 32, 32B).
38. Ibid. (PG 32, 33D); trans. Anderson, 64–65.
39. Ibid. (PG 32, 32C and 32D).
40. Ibid. (PG 32, 32D–E); trans. Anderson, 63.
41. See ibid. (PG 32, 32E); trans. Anderson, 64.
42. See ibid. (PG 32, 33A); trans. Anderson, 64.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid. (PG 32, 33A–B); trans. Anderson, 64.
45. On the point, consider the following text (my emphasis): "One cannot *see* the

the divinity of the Spirit from the holiness of angels, and one can see that this text expresses the key to understanding the rank and role of the Holy Spirit, namely, that his presence is necessary for one to have blessed knowledge or knowing holiness. 1 Corinthians 12:3, however, is accompanied by another Scripture that contains the same basic idea, 1 Corinthians 2:10 ("God has revealed to us through the Spirit").

In the third *thesis* (21, 52–24, 57) of this central part of *On the Holy Spirit,* Basil makes many arguments for the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but it is the argument in which he speaks of the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and the Son that is of concern.

Indeed, in this argument, Basil interprets many other scriptural texts by clearly employing the scriptural truth that is expressed by 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 12:10. In 2 Thessalonians 3:5, Paul writes, "May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ." Basil asks who this Lord is "who directs us into the love of God."[46] Of course it is the Holy Spirit whom Paul calls Lord, making this passage fit neatly into Basil's theological framework; for the Lord, the Holy Spirit, directs us to the Father through the Son but he must be divine to do so. Basil cites 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 and 2 Corinthians 3:14, 16–17 to make the same point, and his use of the latter especially reflects his interpretive hand.[47] Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit [2 Cor 3:14–17]." Basil contrasts literal and spiritual interpretations

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Father without the Spirit! It would be like living in a house *at night when the lamps are extinguished; one's eyes would be darkened* and could not exercise their function. Unable to distinguish the value of objects, one might very well treat gold as if it were iron. *It is the same in the spiritual world; it is impossible to maintain a life of holiness without the Spirit*" (ibid. [PG 32, 33A–B]; trans. Anderson, 64).

46. Ibid. 21, 52 (PG 32, 44B).

47. 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 reads: "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, so that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."

of the law. Those who do not read the Scriptures in the Holy Spirit are ignorant of Christ's coming and unaware that the archetype has replaced the types.[48] The heart illumined by the Holy Spirit, however, "passes through the curtain of literal obscurity and arrives at unutterable truths."[49]

The centrality of the scriptural idea behind the texts considered above can also be seen in Basil's refutations. The central scriptural idea expresses best who the Spirit is and what he does to save and to perfect human beings. For this reason, Basil interprets other key texts in its light and not vice versa. *On the Holy Spirit* 18, 47 demonstrates this point.

Here Basil argues against those who rank the Spirit under the Father and the Son. After refuting them, he offers an additional proof of the Spirit's divinity in the course of which he explains the Son's relationship to the Spirit. The Spirit, says Basil, "is also called the Spirit of Christ, since He is naturally related to Him."[50] Basil cites a couple of Scriptures, both of which he interprets to express the same idea: Romans 8:9—"Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" and John 16:14—"He will glorify me." Basil maintains that only the Holy Spirit can adequately glorify Christ because he is the Spirit of truth, because "he Himself is truth shining brightly"; only the Holy Spirit can make known the glory of Christ.[51] "He," Basil goes on to say, "is the Spirit of wisdom, revealing Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, in His own greatness. As the Paraclete he reflects the goodness of the Paraclete who sent him, and his own dignity reveals the majesty of him from whom he proceeded."[52] These Scriptures, for Basil, express the epistemic relationship between the Son and the Spirit.

According to Basil, we are saved only by beholding the Father, and

48. *De Sp. S.* 21, 52 (PG 32, 44E–45A); trans. Anderson, 82.
49. Ibid. (PG 32, 45A); trans. Anderson, 82–83.
50. Ibid. 18, 46 (PG 32, 39A); trans. Anderson, 73.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid. (PG 32, 39A–B); trans. Anderson, 73 (altered). Anderson refers the "sending Paraclete" to the Father by inserting the "the Father" in parentheses after "Paraclete."

we can behold the Father only in the Son, his image, and, in turn, behold the image only in the Holy Spirit. "If we are illumined by divine power," Basil writes, "and fix our eyes on the beauty of the image of the invisible God, and through the image are led up to the indescribable beauty of its source, it is because we have been inseparably joined to the Spirit of knowledge. He gives those who live the vision of the truth the power which enables them to see the image, and this power is Himself."[53] It is important to note that the Spirit is not the image of the Son; he does not communicate knowledge of the Son by offering us an image of the Son to look at. Rather, the Spirit is the light by which one sees the image. The Spirit himself is not looked at, but it is he in whom and by whom one sees. After Basil gives this brief but powerful statement of the way of our salvation, he cites two scriptural texts: "No one knows the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27); and "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). For Matthew 11:27, Basil could have just as easily written, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). These two ideas, expressed by Matthew 11:27 and 1 Corinthians 12:3, capture the essence of Basil's arguments for the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, respectively. Human beings know that the Son is divine because he communicates to them the divine knowledge of the Father, and they know that the Spirit is divine because without him they cannot have the divine knowledge of the Father through the Son.

The scriptural idea behind 1 Corinthians 12:3 is the center of Basil's understanding of the Spirit not only because it perfectly expresses what the Spirit is and does, but also because Basil interprets other key texts on the Spirit in its light. In *On the Holy Spirit* 18, 47—just after he cites 1 Corinthians 12:3—Basil explains that other Scriptures make the same point. He mentions John 4:24 ("God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth"), Psalm 36:9 ("In thy light do

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But this is not warranted by the text, and, moreover, in another place Basil explicitly refers to the Son as a "Paraclete": "He [the Spirit] shares the name Paraclete with the Only-Begotten" (ibid. 19, 48; trans. Anderson, 76).

53. Ibid. 18, 47 (PG 32, 39D); trans. Anderson, 74.

we see light"), and John 1:9 ("The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world"). Read in the light of 1 Corinthians 12:3, these passages take on a particular meaning. The Holy Spirit "reveals the glory of the Only-Begotten in Himself, and He gives true worshippers the knowledge of God in Himself. The way to divine knowledge ascends from one Spirit through the one Son to the one Father."[54]

One other chapter in which Basil makes the same kind of interpretations deserves mention. In chapter 26 for several paragraphs, Basil cites Scripture after Scripture explaining the theological significance of the biblical use of "*in* the Holy Spirit."[55] Concluding his exposition Basil beautifully interprets John 4:24 according to the theological categories around which his understanding of the Son and Spirit revolve. The significance of this passage justifies quoting it *in extenso:*

> We learn that just as the Father is made visible *in* the Son, so also the Son is recognized *in* the Spirit. To worship *in* the Spirit implies that our intelligence has been enlightened. Consider the words spoken to the Samaritan woman. She was deceived by local custom into believing that worship could only be offered in a specific place, but the Lord, attempting to correct her, said that worship ought to be offered in Spirit and in truth. By *truth* he clearly meant Himself. If we say the worship offered *in* the Son (the Truth) is worship offered *in* the Father's Image, we can say the same about worship offered *in* the Spirit since the Spirit in Himself reveals the divinity of the Lord. The Holy Spirit cannot be divided from the Father and the Son in worship. If you remain outside the Spirit, you cannot worship at all, and if you are *in* Him you cannot separate Him from God. Light cannot be separate from what it makes visible, and it is impossible for you to recognize Christ, the Image of the invisible God, unless the Spirit enlightens you. Once you see the Image, you cannot ignore the light; you see the Light and the Image simultaneously. It is fitting that when we see Christ, the Brightness of God's glory, it is always through the illumination of the Spirit. Through Christ the Image, may we be led to the Father, for He bears the seal of the Father's very likeness.[56]

54. Ibid. 18, 47 (PG 32, 39E); trans. Anderson, 74–75.
55. See ibid. 26, 61–64.
56. Ibid. 26, 64 (PG 32, 53E–54B); trans. Anderson, 97.

This passage unfolds the relationship among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also presents the theology behind Basil's understanding of the baptismal formula. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit must be united in the baptismal formula because if they are not so united, then baptism cannot be the death of the old way of life and the beginning of divine illumination. In a word, if they are not so united, then baptism cannot save.

For Basil, it is clear that baptism bestows salvation by its cleansing water and by its tripartite confession of faith. Baptism confirms and completes the illumination begun by faith, and this illumination is the knowledge of God. But this divine knowledge has a structure; it is obtained in a certain way. We know the Father, through his Image, the Son, by our union with the Holy Spirit. For Basil, the biblical idea that best reflects the role of the Holy Spirit in the structure of divine knowledge is that expressed by many texts but particularly well by 1 Corinthians 12:3—"No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." Because 1 Corinthians 12:3, 1 Corinthians 12:10, and other such texts express so well Basil's understanding of the structure of divine knowledge and, therefore, of salvation, they are more central to his thought even than the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19—"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is united to the Father and to the Son in the baptismal formula because "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." The baptismal formula tells us *that* the Holy Spirit is so united,[57] but not *why* he is so united. For this reason the scriptural idea expressed by 1 Corinthians 12:3 is more central to understanding Basil's theology of the Spirit, even though Basil cites Matthew 28:19 more often (seven times).[58] The centrality of this scriptural idea lies in the fact that it so well expresses Basil's understanding of salvation and that he uses it to interpret many scriptural texts on the Holy Spirit.

57. See ibid. 10, 24; 17, 43.

58. The numerous references to Matthew 28:19 are explained by the fact that Basil spends much time defending his use of the doxology that substitutes "with the Holy Spirit" for "and the Holy Spirit." See ibid. 25, 59; 25, 60; 27, 68; and 28, 69.

Conclusion

LINGUISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AND BIBLICAL TRUTH

Basil lived in two worlds: that of ancient Greek culture and learning *(paideia)* and that of the Christian faith, lived in the liturgy and expressed in the Scripture. His work as a bishop, theologian, and preacher was in large part to make these two worlds one. He brought the ways of the Greeks into the higher order of Christian Providence. This means not only that Basil could make some use of metaphysics and ethics, but also that he could adopt ways of analyzing arguments, of refuting opponents, and of persuading others of his view of the Christian faith. In short, Basil showed that Christianity had the strength and power to take to itself whatever was good among the Greeks, ennobling their culture with the name of Christ and yet remaining true to itself. He did this, of course, not standing outside of Greek culture, but within it.

Basil first articulated his theological vision in his work *Against Eunomius*. The heart of this vision is the utter transcendence and simplicity of God, especially as it is expressed in Basil's teaching on the *epinoiai* of God. Basil borrows from various philosophical sources (especially the Stoics) in the articulation of his theological vision, but he appropriates no philosophical system *in toto* and even alters what he borrows.

In spite of his enduring insistence upon, and understanding of, the transcendence and simplicity of God, Basil's Trinitarian theology developed in four distinct stages. The first stage of his Trinitarian thought is characterized by his preference for *homoios kat' ousian* (and related expressions) over *homoousios.* At the time, Basil thought that *homoousios* had connotations that were too materialistic and that the word did not adequately preserve the distinction between the Father and the Son. *Against Eunomius* clearly reflects these theological concerns.

One can discern a change in Basil's mind, however, and a new stage in the development of his thought with the letter to Maximus (Ep. 9), written sometime between 360 and 365. Basil reveals to Maximus that he now prefers *homoousios* to *homoios* and its cognates. Though both words may be used to express the relationship between the Father and the Son, *homoousios* is less open to perversion.

The third and fourth stages of development in Basil's Trinitarian thought are marked by the emergence of *prosôpon* and *hypostasis* as technical terms for the divine plurality. In his first theological work, *Against Eunomius,* Basil did not use *prosôpon* in any technical way, and he generally used *hypostasis* as a synonym for *ousia.* In his polemic against the Sabellians, however, Basil urged that three *prosôpa* be confessed in order to avoid the error of modalism.

But the confession of three *prosôpa,* Basil found, did not safeguard the faith from a Sabellian interpretation because the "Arians" charged that for Sabellius, Father and Son are *homoousios kath' hypostasin.* The "Arians" thought the Father and Son to be distinct *hypostaseis* so that, to them, those who confessed only one *hypostasis* did not acknowledge a difference between the Father and the Son. Thus, to teach three *prosôpa* but one *hypostasis* still seemed Sabellian. Through his polemic with the Paulinians at Antioch, Basil realized that the only way to safeguard *prosôpa* from a modalistic interpretation was to distinguish between *ousia* and *hypostasis* and to use *prosôpon* together with *hypostasis* as the word for that which is three in God. The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* also clears *homoousios* of the "Arian" objection that

it too is Sabellian, for, given this distinction, *homoousios* means identity of *ousia* and not identity of *hypostasis.* The Father and Son could have an identity of *ousia* and still remain distinct *hypostaseis.* Of course, this could not obtain if *ousia* and *hypostasis* were used as synonyms.

Basil erects a theological edifice composed of Trinitarian language and a coherent metaphysical vision of God; he thereby artfully combines Greek and Christian thought in the expression of transcendent truth. His linguistic achievement is not the last word, however, on his Trinitarian thought, for the Trinitarian controversy was not just over the language used to describe Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The controversy is also one over the right interpretation of Scripture, and Basil's interpretation of the Scriptures not only lies at the foundation of his synthesis but also forms a part of the synthesis itself. For in interpreting the Scriptures, Basil makes use of his classical education and the techniques of ancient dialectic.

It is important to locate the scriptural center of Basil's view of the Father and Son, on the one hand, and of the Holy Spirit, on the other. Basil's understanding of the Father and the Son is grounded most fundamentally in the scriptural idea behind John 14:9 ("He who has seen me has seen the Father"), though expressed by other texts as well, and his understanding of the Holy Spirit, in the scriptural idea behind 1 Corinthians 12:3 ("No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit"), though, in this case, too, expressed by other texts. To say that these scriptural ideas ground Basil's Trinitarian theology is to say that they perfectly express what Basil considers to be the truth about the Trinity. The idea behind John 14:9 expresses what it means for the Son to be divinely begotten, and what it means for him to be Image and Resplendence: "divine generation" (stripped of all corporeal and material connotations) means that the Son perfectly makes known the Father. The idea behind 1 Corinthians 12:3 explains what it means for the Holy Spirit to be the Spirit of knowledge and of wisdom and what it means to worship in Spirit and in Truth. The Son and the Spirit are, for Basil, primarily epistemically related to the Father. These epistemic relationships are especially evident in the economy

of salvation. The Father cannot be known—which is to say that human beings cannot be saved and made holy—except through the Son; and the Son cannot be known except in the Holy Spirit. But if the Son and Spirit make the Father known, if the Son and Spirit bestow upon us blessed knowledge and knowing holiness, then they must be both equal to, and distinct from, the Father. These are the biblical truths that Basil discerned with the help of Greek *paideia,* the biblical truth that Basil precisely and lucidly expressed by means of the subtlety and the philosophical and persuasive power of the Greek language.

APPENDIX I

Studies of Basil's Works

Editions of Basil's Works

In 1532 Jerome Froben published the first edition of Basil's works, but it lacked the ascetic works.[1] Reginald Pole's Venice edition of 1535 remedied this omission by publishing the ascetic works with *Contra Eunomium* 1–3. Froben published a second edition in 1551, combining his first edition with the Venice edition and adding *Contra Eunomium* 4–5, which are now acknowledged to be spurious.[2] A Parisian edition of 1618 added some more of Basil's letters with facing Latin translation. All of these editions were surpassed by that of two Benedictines of St. Maur, Julien Garnier and Prudentius Maran. Garnier published two volumes in 1721 and 1722, respectively. After Garnier's death in 1725, Maran finished his work by publishing in 1730 the final volume, which contained *On the Holy Spirit* and the letters. The Maurist edition of Basil's works was improved but not surpassed. L. de Sinner published an edition in 1839, basically consisting of the Maurist edition with the addition of three spurious works from a Moscow edition of 1775. In 1857, Migne reprinted the Maurist edition in *Patrolo-*

1. For a very detailed and extensive study, see Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana universalis.* See also Rudberg, "Manuscripts and Editions," 49–65; Rudberg, *Études sur la tradition;* and de Mendieta, "Essai d'une histoire critique," 52 (1940): 141–61; 53 (1941): 119–51; 54 (1942): 124–44; 56 (1945–46): 126–73.

2. See Hayes, *The Greek Manuscript Tradition.*

gia Graeca 29–32. Migne's edition itself was reprinted in 1886, but with many typographical errors.

Some individual works that are relevant to my undertaking have received further critical work. In 1892 C. F. H. Johnston published an improved edition of the Maurist text of *On the Holy Spirit.*[3] In 1968 Benoît Pruche used both Maran's and Johnston's text to create the standard edition of *On the Holy Spirit* for Sources chrétiennes.[4] Between 1926 and 1934, there appeared Roy J. Deferrari's edition of Basil's letters, but he did not improve the Maurist text.[5] Yves Courtonne, however, did significantly improve the Maurist edition of the letters, and his edition is now standard.[6] The Maurist version of *Against Eunomius* has also been improved. Bernard Sesboüé, Georges-Matthieu de Durand, and Louis Doutreleau collaborated to produce the Sources chrétiennes edition in 1982–83.[7]

Translations

Basil's works were translated into other languages from as early as 400. In fact, his works were translated into Latin, Syriac, Georgian, Armenian, Coptic, Arabic, and Old Slavonic.[8] These ancient translations often prove useful to scholars who are trying to establish the best edition of Basil's work, for they sometimes provide the only access to certain manuscript traditions. For my purposes, however, the modern English translations of Basil's dogmatic works are more relevant.

Among Basil's dogmatic works, I include *Against Eunomius, On the Holy Spirit,* and assorted letters and homilies.[9] *Against Eunomius* has

3. See *The Book of St. Basil,* ed. Johnston

4. See *Sur le Saint-Esprit,* ed. and trans. Pruche.

5. See Deferrari, *Saint Basil, The Letters.*

6. See Saint Basile, *Lettres,* ed. Yves Courtonne. See also the reviews of Courtonne's work by Stig Y. Rudberg in *Gnomon.*

7. See Basil of Caesarea, *Con. Eun.,* ed. Sesboüé et al.

8. See Fedwick, "The Translations," 439–512.

9. Those who hold *De Spiritu,* a small work found at the end of the certainly spurious fifth book of *Against Eunomius,* to be authentic may include it among Basil's dogmatic works. But its authenticity is debated. R. P. C. Hanson describes it thus: "it is written in a noticeably more elegant and flowing style than the rest of Book V [of *Against Eunomius*]; the interesting point is that it is full of echoes of passages in Plotinus' *Enneads.* There does not seem to me to be anything in the work positively precluding Basil's authorship. There is one passage in which the author may have called the Holy Spirit 'God' *(theos)* but the reading 'divine' *(theios)* is possible, too. The author speaks of the Spirit 'made like

never been translated into English, but Sesboüé published a facing French translation in his edition of the Greek. *On the Holy Spirit* was first translated into English by George Lewis in 1888.[10] Blomfield Jackson's translation appeared in 1895,[11] and David Anderson revised this translation in 1980.[12] Jackson was the first to translate the whole corpus of the letters, and they have since been translated twice: once by Roy J. Deferrari for the Loeb Classical Library,[13] and once by Agnes Clare Way for the series The Fathers of the Church.[14] Before Jackson's translation, only portions of the letters were translated.[15] Jackson also produced the first English translation of a portion (the *Hexaemeron*) of Basil's homilies.[16] Agnes Clare Way has since published a volume of Basil's exegetical homilies.[17]

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to God who sends him forth' which is perhaps not quite Basilian. But its treatment of the Holy Spirit as uncreated and endowed with every exalted epithet except *homoousion* and *theos* is eminently reminiscent of Basil. We may perhaps regard it tentatively as an early work of his, a trial run for *De Spiritu Sancto*" (Hanson, *The Search,* 687). Paul Henry and Hans Dehnhard defend the authenticity of *De Spiritu;* see Henry, *Études Plotiniennes,* 162–67 and Dehnhard, *Das Problem,* 32–67. Against Henry and Dehnhard, John M. Rist challenges *De Spiritu's* authenticity; see Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism,'" 193–95. See also Jean Gribomont's review of Dehnhard's *Das Problem,* 487–92. The arguments of Henry, Dehnhard, and Rist will be considered below. Though I am inclined to hold *De Spiritu* as inauthentic, its authorship is, at the very best, uncertain. Therefore, it is not included in this study of Basil's dogmatic works.

Among Basil's dogmatic letters are the following: 9, to Maximus the Philosopher; 52, to the *Canonicae;* 125, the confession of faith dictated for Eustathius of Sebaste; 214, to Terentius about Antioch; 216, to Meletius (about Ep. 214); 223, Against Eustathius; 233–36, to Amphilochius; and 361 and 363, to Apollinaris. Basil's dogmatic homilies include: 3, *In illud, Attende tibi ipsi;* 6, *In Illud, Destruam horrea,* etc.; 9, *In illud, Quod Deus non est auctor malorum;* 12, *In principium Proverbiorum;* 15, *De fide;* 16, *In illud, In principio erat Verbum;* and 24, *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos.*

10. See *Basil the Great: On the Holy Spirit,* NPNF 2, 8:1–50.

11. See *The Treatise* De Spiritu Sancto, trans. Jackson.

12. See *On the Holy Spirit,* trans. Anderson.

13. See Deferrari, *Saint Basil, the Letters.*

14. See Way, *Saint Basil, Letters.*

15. In the preface to his volume for Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Jackson refers to these portions of translated letters. Jackson, of course, should be trusted on this point in spite of the fact that I cannot locate these translations. See Jackson, "Preface," in *Basil: Letters and Select Works,* v.

16. See *The Hexaemeron,* trans. Jackson, in *Basil: Letters and Select Works,* 51–107.

17. See *St. Basil: Exegetic Homilies,* FC 46.

Important Studies of Basil's Trinitarian Theology

Many of the significant studies of Basil's Trinitarian thought center around what he meant by *ousia* and *hypostasis.* The history of this debate began in the late nineteenth century with Theodor Zahn's hypothesis that *homoousios,* as the term was used by Athanasius, meant the numerical identity of the Father and Son.[18] Von Harnack accepted Zahn's thesis and its implication, namely that the Cappadocians understood *homoousios* as denoting not numeric, but generic identity.[19] In effect, this makes the Cappadocians Homoiousians and tritheists. The reaction to this position was strong. James Bethune-Baker and Adolf Martin Ritter made the best arguments.[20] Bethune-Baker argued that by *ousia* the Cappadocians meant something really subsisting rather than conceptual and generic, and Ritter demonstrated that the so-called Cappadocian Trinitarian formula ("one *ousia,* three *hypostaseis*") did not originate with the Homoiousians.

Though most scholars rejected the Zahn/Harnack hypothesis, debate continued over the meaning for Basil of *ousia.* G. L. Prestige saw in Basil a dependence upon Aristotle.[21] Paul Henry and Hans Dehnhard argue for Basil's dependence on Plotinus. One of the questions here is the authenticity of Basil's *De Spiritu.* Henry published *De Spiritu* with that part of the *Enneads* upon which it depends and thought that the former came from Basil's pen.[22] At the University of Marburg, Dehnhard wrote his dissertation on the dependence of Basil upon Plotinus, and it was published in 1964 in the series, "Patristische Texte und Studien."[23] Dehnhard concluded that Basil borrowed from Plotinus because of his kinship in thought with Origen and Gregory Thaumaturgos.[24] Furthermore, in his later works *(On the Holy Spirit* and *De Fide),* Basil uses not Plotinus directly but his own earlier work, *De Spiritu,* which did directly use Plotinus.

18. See Zahn, *Marcellus von Ancyra,* 8–32.

19. See von Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte,* trans. Buchanan et al., 80–89.

20. See Bethune-Baker, *The Meaning of Homoousios* and Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel.* See also Lebon, "Le sort du 'Consubstantiel' Nicéen," 485–529; and Dinsen, *Homoousios: Die Geschichte.* According to G. Christopher Stead, "Lebon's treatment of the term *homoousios* is based on a view of *ousia* itself, as indicating 'concrete reality' rather than a mere abstraction, 'the concept.'" (Stead, "The Significance of the *Homoousios,*" 401).

21. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought,* 191–93.

22. Henry, *Études Plotiniennes,* 185–96.

23. See Dehnhard, *Das Problem.*

24. See ibid., 87.

John Rist was very critical of Henry and Dehnhard.[25] First of all, he thought, probably rightly, that the authorship of *De Spiritu* could not be known with certainty, and *De Spiritu* certainly betrays the influence of Plotinus.[26] Secondly, while he admits possible Plotinian influences on Basil in certain texts, he argues that the evidence does not support the claims of Henry and Dehnhard.[27] Furthermore, Rist denies the influence of Plotinus upon Basil's metaphysics or Trinitarian theology.[28]

Finally, mention should be made of the position that regards Basil as dependent upon the Stoics. In his demonstration of the inauthenticity of Ep. 38 in the Basilian corpus, Reinhard Hübner showed that Basil's conception of *ousia* is largely derived from Stoic thought.[29] Wolf-Dieter Hauschild and Jürgen Hammerstaedt have challenged Hübner's arguments, however.[30] Volker Henning Drecoll furthers the work of Hauschild and Hammerstaedt by arguing for Ep. 38's authenticity on the basis of the manuscript tradition, vocabulary, style, and content.[31] The manuscript tradition, vocabulary, and style of Ep. 38 do not clearly reveal the identity of its author. Therefore, Drecoll argues, as did Hübner, mainly from the content of the letter. Unlike Hübner, however, Drecoll saw in Basil's understanding of *ousia* (in Ep. 38) both the influence of Aristotle and an agreement with the account of *ousia* in Basil's other works.[32] It remains to be seen whether or not Drecoll's arguments will overturn scholarly consensus on the question of Ep. 38's authenticity.

Other works on Basil's theology deserve mention. In his study of *On the Holy Spirit,* Hermann Dörries concludes that for Basil, religious experience and thought are inseparably bound. Baptism, faith, doxology, and the monastic form of life are integrated by Basil in a unique way.[33] Dörries also uses Basil's famous *dogma/kêrygma* distinction to

25. On many points, Rist follows Gribomont's review of Dehnhard's book; see Gribomont, Review of *Das Problem,* 487–92.

26. See Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism,'" 193–95.

27. Ibid., 195–208.

28. Ibid., 220.

29. See Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa."

30. Hauschild translated Basil's letters into German and therein defends the authenticity of Ep. 38. See Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea,* 1:182–89; n. 181–202. See also Hammerstaedt, "Zur Echtheit von Basiliusbrief 38," 416–19.

31. Drecoll's study is his dissertation of 1995 at Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität in Münster. See Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 297–331.

32. Drecoll directly addresses Hübner's arguments; see Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 326–29.

33. See Dörries, *De Spiritu Sancto,* 121–62, 179–80.

explain his Trinitarian teaching: the three *hypostaseis* belong to *kêrygma,* the divine monarchy, to *dogma.*[34] In 1981 Pia Luislampe published her dissertation of 1979 on Basil's pneumatology. Luislampe concluded that the constitutive elements of Basil's theology of the Spirit are the triadic formulae of the Old and New Testaments, especially Matthew 28:19, the "Taufbefehl." Baptism is significant because it is the "Sitz im Leben" of the confession and acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is bound with creation (Gn 1:2) and resurrection and with the beginning of our being and its coming to perfection. Baptism brings these powers of the Spirit to bear on the individual believer.[35]

Standard Interpretations of Basil's Trinitarian Theology

In the past one hundred years scholars have studied Basil's Trinitarian theology from a particular point of view. I will here describe their approach with a view toward pointing out some of its flaws.[36]

Though standard histories of doctrine approach Basil's thought on the Trinity in the same way, scholars differ on what Basil actually taught and believed. The differences among scholars are of the utmost significance: some determine Basil to be a tritheist who was ultimately unfaithful to the Nicene faith; others consider him to be the guarantor of the Trinity of persons, guarding the Nicene faith against the heretical interpretations of modalists. In spite of important differences, standard patristic works approach Basil's teaching on the Trinity in the same way, that is, from a predominantly philological and philosophical point of view. Philologically speaking, the words that Basil uses to explain the triune God are analyzed with a view toward discerning exactly what he meant by them. Moreover, philological analysis strives to determine what Basil meant by these words especially in the light of doctrinal debate and in reaction to others' use of the same words. Philosophically speaking, scholars study the meanings of the words that Basil uses in order to discover whether and to what extent he borrows from particular schools of ancient philosophy. Like many of his

34. See ibid., 121–27, and 180.

35. See Luislampe, *Spiritus vivificans,* 189–93.

36. I have limited this treatment to books that have wide scope, most of which fit the genre of *"dogmengeschichte."* These general works, however, are based upon more detailed and focused scholarship, and the latter may be classified in the same way as I am classifying the former.

Christian contemporaries, Basil breathed deeply of Greek *paideia* and Hellenistic culture. As a consequence, many scholars have attempted to understand Basil's Trinitarian thought by identifying therein the influence of particular philosophical schools.

This standard approach to Basil's Trinitarian thought, what I have called the philological and philosophical approach, may be outlined more concretely. Scholars have sought to answer a certain set of questions with regard to Basil's teaching. What did Basil mean by *ousia?* What the Stoics meant by it? Or the Aristotelians? Or the Platonists? Or did he mean something else entirely? How did Basil distinguish between *ousia* and *hypostasis?* What synonyms did he use for these words? Do *ousia* and *hypostasis,* in turn, nuance the sense of the words for which they are synonyms? How did Basil understand *homoousios?* As Athanasius did? Or as Nicaea did? These questions rightly assume that the Trinitarian controversy is over language about God. Basil has his place in this controversy because of the way in which he refined the language about God.

This traditional philosophical and philological approach has produced a great deal of insight into Basil's Trinitarian thought. In fact, much of the present work is devoted to this methodology. The approach, though, does have flaws. It is important to note that these flaws arise from the particular ways in which the method has been applied and are not inherent in the philological and philosophical approach itself. First, most scholars have exaggerated the rigidity of Basil's Trinitarian vocabulary. They attribute to him the formula—one *ousia,* three *hypostaseis*—a formula that, strictly speaking, he never employed.[37] Secondly, while it is commonly acknowledged that Basil fought the Eunomians, on the one hand, and the Sabellians, on the other hand, the historical and polemical contexts of Basil's theological work are not stressed enough. Thirdly—and as a corollary to the last point—the question of Basil's philosophical sources and the abstract meanings of his terms has dominated the discussion of his Trinitarian thought. Philosophical sources and abstract meanings became the focus for so many for so long because of the work of Theodor Zahn and Adolf von Harnack. Harnack's controverted theses held the atten-

37. Joseph T. Lienhard shows that the formula, "one *ousia,* three *hypostases,*" is "more a piece of modern academic shorthand than a quotation from the writings of the Cappadocians" (Lienhard, *"Ousia* and *Hypostasis,"* 99–101).

tion of most scholars after him and focused the discussion around abstract meanings of words and philosophical sources. In spite of these problems, much can be learned from the traditional approach to Basil's Trinitarian thought. In order to reveal both their defects and their insights, in what follows I will present some of these traditional accounts of Basil's thought. I will then propose a way to overcome these weaknesses.

Though his conclusions concerning Cappadocian Trinitarian theology draw much attention and create much controversy, the way in which Adolf von Harnack analyzes Cappadocian Trinitarian theology is typical. Before the turn of the century, von Harnack wrote that "the Cappadocians started from the *homoousios*" but that they meant by it something very different from what Athanasius did.[38] Having recognized the *homoousios,* the Cappadocians, says Harnack, "accordingly set up a system of doctrine which neither disavowed the theology of Origen, that is, science in general, nor yet remained in the terminological helpless condition of Athanasius."[39] The Cappadocians achieved this terminological clarity, Harnack held, by altering the thought of Athanasius and developing that of Basil of Ancyra, one of the founders of the homoiousian party. According to von Harnack, "*ousia* now got a meaning which was half way between the abstract 'substance' and the concrete 'individual substance,' still it inclined very strongly in the direction of the former. *Hypostasis* got a meaning half way between 'Person' and 'Attribute' (Accident, Modality), still the conception of Person entered more largely into it. *Prosôpon* was avoided because it had a Sabellian sound, but it was not rejected."[40] The Cappadocians preferred the formula "*mia ousia (mia theotês) en trisin hypostasesin* (one divine substance [one divinity] in three *subjects*)."[41]

G. L. Prestige's monumental *God in Patristic Thought* traces the history of the Christian doctrine of God up to the sixth century. In this book, fashioned in the mid-1930s from the leftover material that he amassed on the Trinity and the Incarnation for the *Patristic Greek Lexicon,* Prestige follows the history of the meanings of the words that became central to the Christian theological expression and the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. Included in his account are the meanings that these words had for Basil.

38. Von Harnack, *History of Dogma,* 4:84.
39. Ibid., 4:85.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 4:85–86.

The meanings of *ousia* and *hypostasis* that Prestige had explained earlier in his book provide the proper context for his explanation of Basil's use of *homoousios, ousia,* and *hypostasis.*[42] In an oft-quoted passage he says:

> To sum up briefly the relations of hypostasis and ousia, it may be said first that they are often, for practical purposes, equivalent. Nevertheless, they are probably never strictly identical in meaning, except in the Western instances quoted above, in which hypostasis may be regarded as a literal representation of the Latin substantia. Both hypostasis and ousia describe positive, substantial existence, that which is, that which subsists; *to on, to hyphestêkos.* But ousia tends to regard internal characteristics and relations, or metaphysical reality; while hypostasis regularly emphasises the externally concrete character of the substance, or empirical objectivity.[43]

It is in the light of this distinction that Prestige explains the nuance in meaning that Basil gave to *homoousios, ousia,* and *hypostasis.*

Prestige first recounts Basil's early reservations about the use and meaning of *homoousios* as reflected in his correspondence with Apollinaris of Laodicea.[44] Prestige reports that in *Against Eunomius* (ca. 364) "Basil uses the word homoousios more than once of secular objects in its original and proper sense, and once theologically, in the same sense, that is to say the sense accepted by Eusebius at the Council of Nicaea."[45] The significance of this point is that Basil does not use *homoousios* in exactly the same sense as does Athanasius, for whom it also

42. *Ousia, hypostasis,* and *homoousios* are not the only theological terms of Basil's that Prestige explains; he considers Basil's use of *physis* as a synonym for *ousia* and makes much of his use of *tropos tês hyparxeôs.*

43. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought,* 188.

44. Scholars debate the authenticity of this correspondence. Henry Chadwick briefly reports the history of the debate in the preface to Prestige's posthumously published *St. Basil the Great and Apollinaris of Laodicea,* vii–viii. Hanson remarks that "the work of G. L. Prestige and of H. de Riedmatten has made it almost impossible to regard these letters as a forgery, so exactly do they fit the historical situation between 360 and 364" (Hanson, *The Search,* 695–96). Hanson reports that the primary obstacle to their authenticity "is that Basil in defending himself against Eustathius' smear campaign admitted (though reluctantly and deviously) that he had corresponded with Apollinaris, but said that this had taken place twenty years before (i.e., before 375) and when they were both laymen. The extant correspondence could not possibly have been as early as that. We may conjecture that Basil is referring to an earlier lost exchange of letters (which still if the extant correspondence is genuine makes out Basil to be at the very least disingenuous) or that his strong desire to disavow the connection caused his memory to fail him badly, or, more simply, that he was misrepresenting the true state of affairs" (ibid., 695, n. 72). See also de Riedmatten, "La Correspondance" 7 (1956): 199–210; 8 (1957): 53–70.

45. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought,* 226.

signifies, according to Prestige, the "divine identity"; "it is not the divine identity but the divine equality which Basil uses homoousios to secure."[46] Prestige hastens to add, however, that this difference in understanding *homoousios* does not mean that Basil conceived of the *ousia* of God as some sort of collective, generic, or logical unity. Indeed, though Basil does not use the word "identity" *(tautotês)* in *On the Holy Spirit* 45, "the real meaning of the monarchy," Prestige insists, "was seen in a unity of ousia."[47] This meaning given to *ousia* bears upon the meaning that *hypostasis* will have. If the *ousia* of God is not the generic concept of Godhead, then the *hypostaseis,* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not going to be instantiations of this universal, or members of the species "God." Rather the *hypostaseis* will be the "several expression unimpaired of an identical single ousia, which is concrete, incapable of any limiting or qualifying relation, and exhaustive of the content of the being of its several presentations: the prosopa [or *hypostaseis*] are constituted by the permanent and objective presentation of this ousia, respectively, as Paternal, Filial, and Sanctifical."[48]

Prestige views Basil's contribution to the Trinitarian controversy as a working out of the terms that were to be employed in a "theological settlement," a settlement between those who emphasized the oneness of God to the detriment of the triplicity, i.e., the Sabellians, and those who stressed the triplicity at the expense of the unity, i.e., the "Semi-Arians." "The Cappadocian Settlement finally fixed the statement of Trinitarian orthodoxy in the formula of one ousia and three hypostaseis. It was worked out largely by Basil, supported by the strenuous efforts of the uncompromising Epiphanius, preached by the inspired populariser, Gregory of Nazianzus, and elaborated by the acute and speculative mind of Gregory of Nyssa."[49] Thus, Prestige concludes, in the controversy over how to speak of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Basil used certain words that had their own rich history of philosophical and theological meanings, and he carved out for them new nuances, thus making them suitable to express the greatest Christian mystery.

In the 1950s Johannes Quasten wrote an account of Basil's role in the Trinitarian controversy that follows the same lines. He states that "it is Basil's great merit that he went beyond Athanasius and contributed in a high degree to the clarification of Trinitarian and Christologi-

46. Ibid., 228.
47. Ibid., 230.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 233–34.

cal terminology."[50] More specifically, Quasten sees Basil's "chief work" as "fixing once for all, the meaning of the words *ousia* and *hypostasis.*"[51] Basil, according to Quasten, had fixed the meaning of *ousia* as "the existence or essence or substantial entity of God" and that of *hypostasis* as "existence in a particular mode, the manner of being of each of the Persons."[52] He was the first to insist upon this distinction and to hold one *ousia,* three *hypostaseis* as "the only acceptable formula."[53] Basil also clarified Trinitarian language by arguing that *hypostasis* was more suitable than *prosôpon,* "since Sabellius had used the latter to express distinctions in the Godhead which were merely temporal and external."[54]

In 1971 Jaroslav Pelikan published the first of his five volumes on the Christian tradition. Here Pelikan attributes to the Cappadocians the achievement of "a full-scale doctrine of the Trinity, in which both the unity and the diversity could be precisely formulated within a systematic theory and with a technical terminology adequate to obviate misunderstanding or equivocation."[55] Pelikan recounts some of the arguments used by the Cappadocians to establish the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit and proceeds to give an account of their Trinitarian terminology.

It is interesting to note that, according to Pelikan, the Cappadocians secure the unity of the Godhead by means of a Platonic conception of *ousia.* Nevertheless, "the defense of the dogma of the Trinity," says Pelikan, "did not rely primarily on this metaphysical identification," for the transcendent God of Christianity could not be reduced to human philosophical categories.[56] As Pelikan has it, "formulas such as homoousios, three hypostases in one ousia, and mode of origin were metaphysically tantalizing; but the adjudication of their meaning was in many ways a defiance not only of logical consistency, but of metaphysical coherence."[57] While Pelikan's explanation of Basil's Trinitarian theology does not emphasize Basil's terminological advances as some other accounts do, he nonetheless considers Basil's contribution to the resolution of the Trinitarian controversy from a philological and philosophical point of view.

The German edition of Basil Studer's monograph on the Trinity

50. Quasten, *Patrology,* 228.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., 229.
55. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition,* vol. 1, 218.
56. Ibid., 222.
57. Ibid., 223.

and the Incarnation appeared in 1985, and the English translation, only in 1993. Studer, like Quasten, says of Basil that "he is the first to distinguish clearly between *hypostasis* and *ousia.*"[58] In his work, *Against Eunomius,* "Basil contended," writes Studer, "that unbegottenness should be regarded as *idion* and therefore as *hypostasis,* rather than as *koinon* or *ousia.*"[59] Basil later honed his terminology in the heat of the controversy over the Spirit. "He identified, in line with Stoicism, the *ousia* as what it had in common *(koinon)* with the substratum *(hypokeimenon),* which is qualified by quality *(poion),* i.e., by the *hypostasis.* Doing this," Studer continues, "he explained the three hypostases in terms of paternity, sonship and sanctification and defined the hypostasis as *tropos tes hyparxeos,* as the way in which *ousia* is received."[60] Studer attributes to Stoic influence Basil's formulation of his understanding of the Trinity. In this Studer differs from Prestige, who sees primarily Aristotelian philosophy behind Basil's Trinitarian terms, and Pelikan, who detects the influence of Plato.

Richard P. C. Hanson published in 1988 the first comprehensive history of the "Arian" Controversy in English since Henry Gwatkin's *Studies of Arianism* of 1882.[61] In this impressive volume, Hanson treats the Cappadocians and their theology in two long chapters.[62] Hanson's account is unique in that it is complete and has a wide historical scope: he tells us much more about Basil than the words that he uses to express his understanding of the Trinity. Nevertheless, when Hanson writes of Basil's Trinitarian theology, he does not differ methodologically from other authors already considered. After treating in considerable detail what Basil has to say about God and the particular words that he uses and does not use to say it, Hanson remarks that "Basil's most distinguished contribution towards the resolving of the dispute about the Christian doctrine of God was in his clarification of the vocabulary that had hitherto been used."[63] "He can on occasion," Hanson goes on to say, "use *hypostasis* as an equivalent to *ousia,* to mean substance . . . but much more often Basil uses *hypostasis* to mean 'Person of the Trinity' as distinguished from 'substance' which is usually expressed as either *ousia* or 'nature' *(physis)* or 'substratum' *(hypokeimenon)*."[64] Or again, Hanson concludes that "in the important area of

58. Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation,* 142.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 143.
61. See Gwatkin, *Studies in Arianism.*
62. Chapters 21 and 22, Hanson, *The Search,* 676–790.
63. Ibid., 690.
64. Ibid., 690–91.

vocabulary Basil's fairly consistent usage dissipated much confusion and pointed the way for understanding and consensus in the future as Athanasius had never quite succeeded in doing."[65]

In 1995 a volume on the Cappadocians appeared in the Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series edited by Brian Davies. In his short book on the Cappadocians, Anthony Meredith says that "Cappadocian theology is an attempt to interpret the central term *homoousios* in such a way as to insist on the full deity of the Son and of his eternal distinction from the Father."[66] Of Basil, Meredith states that his "central contribution to the theological debate was to clarify or to attempt to clarify the relation between these two terms [*ousia* and *hypostasis*]."[67] Meredith cites Basil's Ep. 236 on the difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis* wherein he uses "a distinction which goes back to Aristotle, [and] the relation between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is likened to that between general and particular, *koinon* and *idion*."[68] Meredith goes on to point out some strengths and weaknesses of Basil's Trinitarian theology, but overall the focus remains on his philological work.

These few authors' accounts of Basil's Trinitarian theology make clear the usefulness of the philological and philosophical approach to the Trinitarian controversy and its resolution. Basil indeed made a significant contribution to clarifying Trinitarian language. The preceding account also, however, discloses the problems of the lexicographical approach as it was practiced. Basil's achievement is presented as the working out of a fixed formula, yet not enough is made of the historical contexts in which he did this work. Besides these two problems, there is an obvious difficulty in discerning Basil's philosophical sources and their purported influence on his Trinitarian vocabulary. On the one hand, all agree that Basil clarified Trinitarian terminology. Yet, on the other hand, agreement is lacking when it comes to discerning exactly what Basil meant by the terms that he used. For example, Prestige maintains that Basil understands *ousia* as Aristotle's *first ousia,*[69] but Pelikan believes that Basil is indebted to the Platonists for the meaning of the same word, while Studer and Hanson ascribe it to the influence of the Stoics.[70] Anthony Meredith sees Basil borrowing

65. Ibid., 693.
66. Meredith, *The Cappadocians,* 103.
67. Ibid., 104.
68. Ibid., 104–5.
69. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought,* 191–93.
70. Hanson finds Reinhard M. Hübner's arguments to this effect convincing. See Hanson, *The Search,* 864, and Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser." See also Fedwick, "A Commentary of Gregory of Nyssa," 31–51.

a distinction concerning *ousia* from Aristotle's *Categories.* Adolf von Harnack does not align the Cappadocians strictly with any particular school. He believes that their conception of *ousia* falls somewhere between "individual substance"[71] and "generic conception,"[72] between Aristotle's *first ousia* and *second ousia,* a middle ground that Aristotle himself did not posit.

Recent scholarship on the fourth century has come increasingly to recognize the centrality of the Scriptures for these theologians. Three recent books reflect this trend: Bernard Sesboüé's *Saint Basile et la Trinité,* John Behr's *The Nicene Faith,*[73] and Lewis Ayres' *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology.*[74] All of these works rightly make much of Basil's linguistic achievement and offer refined pictures of its historical evolution. Ayres places Basil in a broader pro-Nicene context, showing how he reflects the key traits of pro-Nicene theology. Behr especially emphasizes the biblical character of Basil's theology. He identifies the crucial difference between Eunomius and Basil in theological method. For Basil, theology is a reflection upon the acts of God in biblical revelation, not knowledge of God's essence. Behr also draws attention to Basil's partitive exegesis, a practice that places Basil in a tradition that reaches back to Athanasius, Alexander, and into the third century.

Scholarly Treatment of Basil's Use of Scripture: Basil's Dogmatic Works as Exegetical

Generally speaking there are two ways in which the Fathers' use of Scripture has been studied and analyzed. Some scholars study the interpretation of verses, chapters, or books of the Bible in a particular Father or group of Fathers. For example, Rowan Greer has written a monograph on the Fathers' use of Hebrews,[75] while Maurice Wiles has done the same for both the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul.[76] Others have taken a more general approach, treating the exegetical techniques of the Fathers as a whole, rather than focusing on their in-

71. Von Harnack, *History of Dogma,* 4:85.
72. Ibid., 4:120.
73. Behr, *The Nicene Faith,* 263–324.
74. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 187–243.
75. See Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation.*
76. See Wiles, *The Divine Apostle.*

terpretation of particular Scriptures. Neither form considers the use of Scripture in dogmatic works.[77] As Frances Young observes, "On the whole in trying to characterize patristic exegesis, attention has been paid, not to use of the Bible in debate, but to methods used in scriptural expositions as such, in treatise, commentary, or homily."[78]

In his monograph on the patristic exegesis of Hebrews, Rowan Greer cites Basil's *Hexaemeron,* his homilies on the Psalms, and some letters (8 and 260).[79] Basil's *Against Eunomius* and *On the Holy Spirit* are not considered exegetical works in spite of the fact that in them he cites the letter to the Hebrews thirty-five times, while all together in the epistles, the *Hexaemeron,* and the homilies on the Psalms he cites Hebrews fifty-eight times. So, of the times in these works that Hebrews is cited, those in the "dogmatic works" constitute nearly 40 percent.

Maurice Wiles—in both of his books, respectively on the interpretation of the Gospel of John and of the letters of Paul in the early Church—sets out to study patristic commentaries upon the pertinent Scriptures. Given this scope and the fact that Basil wrote no such commentaries, his use of Scripture in the dogmatic works is treated in neither of these monographs. This is not to say, of course, that Basil makes no significant use of either John's Gospel or Paul's Epistles. If sheer quantity is any measure, Basil cites the Gospel of John nearly ninety-five times in *On the Holy Spirit* and nearly eighty times in

77. There have been, however, articles that investigate the Cappadocian interpretation of particular verses, and such articles do cite Basil's dogmatic works. See, for example, Meredith, "Proverbes viii," 349–58; van Parys, "Exégèse et théologie trinitaire," 362–79; and Simonetti, "Sull' interpretazione patristica," 9–87.

78. Young, "Exegetical Method," 292. Two works mentioned by Young, on the use of Scripture in the Arian controversy and on the authority of Scripture and tradition at the Councils of Nicaea and Ephesus, respectively, do not falsify her judgment that the use of Scripture in doctrinal debate has been largely ignored. First, Éphrem Boularand treats the scriptural sources of both Arianism and the Nicene Creed, but by no means focuses on the role of the Scriptures in the Arian controversy; see Boularand, *L'hérésie d'Arius,* 86–93, 322–25, 353–56, and 404–16. Secondly, Ralph E. Person is more concerned to show *that* the authority of the Scriptures (and tradition) were invoked in the teachings of Nicaea and Ephesus than to analyze the principles of scriptural interpretation used in doctrinal debate. Person's conclusions are not about principles of exegesis but about the relationship between Scripture and tradition: "Tradition [the "secondary witness"] is the record of the reception of the primary witness [the Scriptures] in the Church" (Person, *The Mode of Theological Decision Making,* 220).

79. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation,* 97–126. Greer erroneously considers letter 8 authentic; see Bousset, *Apophthegmata,* 335–41 and Melcher, *Der achte Brief des hl. Basilius.*

Against Eunomius; he cites Paul's Epistles (not including Hebrews and the Pastorals) over 260 times in *On the Holy Spirit* and over fifty times in *Against Eunomius.*

Most of the scholarly discussion of Basil's exegetical methods centers around the *Hexaemeron.*[80] The reason for the predominance of the *Hexaemeron* may be that Basil's use of Scripture in dogmatic works is not considered truly "exegetical." Indeed, Manlio Simonetti argues that the Fathers' use of Scripture in a polemical dogmatic context differs greatly from the explanation of scriptural texts in a homily or commentary. According to Simonetti, "precisely because these texts, isolated from their original context, take on a life of their own and are often interpreted in the most diverse ways by different parties in controversy, but always in terms of the new doctrinal and polemical contexts into which they are inserted and which condition their meaning, the hermeneutical procedures which are employed to accommodate them to these new needs entirely abandon the interpretative structures normally used in specifically exegetical settings."[81] Simonetti leaves the reader with the impression that in doctrinal debate the Fathers are not concerned with the real meaning of the text but with clothing prior theological or philosophical assumptions in scriptural language in order to appropriate not its meaning but its authority. Speaking of the various interpretations of texts by "Arians" and anti-Arians, Simonetti remarks that "we should connect the different conclusions, not to differing modes of interpretation (allegorical for the anti-Arians and literal for the Arians) but only to different theological presuppositions which conditioned the interpretation."[82]

Frances Young contests this view. She argues that the Fathers' methods of interpretation do not on the whole vary with the context in which the methods are used. Thus, the exegetical principles of the homily, commentary, and dogmatic work prove to be the same because in all settings the exegete approaches and understands the text according to what he learned in the ancient schools of grammar and rhetoric.[83] Thus, Young would maintain that the use of Scripture

80. Even the latest treatment of Basil's exegesis betrays this fact. See Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers,* 81–93. Hall's book serves as the introduction to the new series edited by Thomas Oden, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture.*

81. Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church,* 122.

82. Ibid., 124.

83. Young, "Exegetical Method," 303.

in dogmatic works is just as much "real exegesis" as that which the Fathers do in homilies and commentaries. What she says about the first of Theodoret's dialogues between Eranistes and Orthodoxus, she would apply to the use of Scripture in doctrinal debate in general. "It is important to note," she says, "that the thrust of the debate is about language and its meaning . . . [and] we do [not] do justice to what is happening if we simply speak of exegesis serving dogmatic ends, or reflecting the prior theological frameworks of the exegete. In the end exegesis is about the meaning and reference of the language used, and such discussion inexorably raises issues beyond the immediate statements under discussion."[84]

84. Ibid., 294.

APPENDIX 2

Reconsideration

THE DATING OF EP. 9 AND *CONTRA EUNOMIUM*

It is commonly acknowledged that Basil of Caesarea's thought about the Trinity changed at some point in the 360s.[1] Naturally, the chronological ordering of Basil's early theological works will reveal the nature of the change in his thought and account for the subsequent evaluation of it. Basil's Ep. 9 and *Contra Eunomium* are especially important here because they preserve a great deal of what Basil has to say about the Trinity.[2] But according to the way in which most scholars date these works, the change in Basil's thought is not a gradual progression culminating in Nicene orthodoxy but, rather, a purposeful misrepresentation of his own position so as to hide his true thoughts in the interest of imperial and ecclesiastical politics. But how confi-

This appendix first appeared as an article in *Vigiliae christianae* 58 (2004): 393–406; it has been slightly revised.

1. The title of Volker Henning Drecoll's recent book reflects this common understanding: *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner (The Development of Basil of Caesarea's Trinitarian Doctrine: His Way from a Homoiousian to a Neo-Nicene Theologian)*. See also the recent work of Bernard Sesboüé wherein he speaks of a "'conversion' Basilienne" (Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité,* 188–200).

2. Only the first three books of *Contra Eunomium* are authentic. See Hayes, *The Greek Manuscript Tradition*.

dently can it be said that Basil was inconsistent or even duplicitous? Basil can be so judged only if he penned *Contra Eunomium* (written against Eunomius who held that the Son was unlike the Father in essence) after Ep. 9 to Maximus the Philosopher, about whom we know nothing. Once the evidence for this dating, however, evanesces, so too does the reason for suspecting that Basil's theological development was something other than a steady course toward Nicene orthodoxy. Ep. 9 and *Contra Eunomium,* then, are important not only for what Basil wrote in them but also for when he wrote them.

In the fourth century, there emerged a number of distinct ways of conceiving the relationship between the Father and the Son. One conception was distinguished from another by the particular Greek words used to describe the relationship. Theological vocabulary in the fourth century measured orthodoxy and carried serious consequences, some of them political. Aëtius, for example, found himself in exile probably for using theological words that the emperor had banned.[3]

One of the most controverted words of the time was *homoousios,* which the Council of Nicaea used against Arius in 325. Many a theologian (most of whom were far less radical than Arius) had serious difficulties with saying the Son is "one in being with" the Father. *Homoousios* to Arius and to many others including the young Basil of Caesarea carried materialistic connotations, as though the Son were a "belching" or "portion" of the Father.[4] *Homoousios,* however, and the theological understanding of the Father and the Son that it expressed were most vehemently opposed by the so-called Neo-Arians, led by Aëtius of Antioch and Eunomius of Cyzicus.[5] They led a movement in the mid-350s to establish a new theological vocabulary and an under-

3. See Philostorgius, *H. E.* 4, 12 (Philostorgius, *Kirchengeschichte mit Leben des Lucian von Antionchien und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen,* ed. Joseph Bidez and Friedhelm Winkelmann, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte, 57 [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972], 65, 12–18): "Upon this [appearing before the emperor] Aetius said, 'I am so far from thinking or asserting that the Son is unlike the Father, that I confess him to be like without any difference.' But Constantine, laying hold of that word, 'without any difference,' and not even enduring to learn in what sense Aetius used that term, gave orders that he should be expelled from the palace" (trans. Edward Walford, *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius, as epitomised by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* [London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855], 468).

4. See Arius' Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia 3; trans. Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy,* 29. See also Arius' Letter to Alexander 3; trans. Rusch, 31. See also Basil, Ep. 361 (Courtonne, 3:221, 15–24).

5. See Kopecek, *A History.*

standing of the Father and the Son that even Arius would have rejected: they proposed that the Son was unlike the Father in essence.

Opposition to the Eunomians came swiftly. In 358 Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea began a countermovement. They and other similarly disposed bishops could stomach neither the *homoousios* of Nicaea nor the "unlike in essence" of the Eunomians. They proposed that the words "like in essence" *(homoios kat' ousian)* best reflected the relationship between the Father and the Son.[6] Hence, those who preferred this way of speaking about Father and Son are called "Homoiousians" or, less accurately and more popularly, "Semi-Arians."[7]

Basil of Caesarea at one time aligned himself with Basil of Ancyra's movement. Basil's association with the movement may be attributed to his friendship with Eustathius of Sebaste who introduced Basil to the ascetic life and proved to be something of a father figure to him. About 360, writing to Apollinaris of Laodicea, Basil rejected *homoousios* and preferred to speak of the Son as "unalterably and exactly like in being" with the Father.[8] Basil, however, changed his mind on what theological language best described the relationship between the Father and the Son; he came to prefer *homoousios.* As he himself writes, "I have therefore myself adopted 'consubstantial,' because I think that this term is less open to perversion."[9] Basil's use of different theological vocabulary at different times signals stages in the development of his thought, steps whereby Basil moved from being a Homoiousian to a Neo-Nicene theologian. Just as knowing the dates of his early works, especially *Contra Eunomium* and Ep. 9, makes it easier to trace Basil's theological development, so, also, miscalculating these dates will misconstrue the progression of his thought.

6. The letter issued by the Synod of Ancyra is preserved in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 2, 1–11, 11.

7. Epiphanius coined the words *hêmiareioi* (Semi-Arians) and *hêmiarei(ani)zô* (to be a Semi-Arian); see *Anacephalaiosis* [*recapitulo brevis panarii*] 73 and *Panarion* 73, 1. The *hêmiareioi* were anathematized in the first canon of the Council of Constantinople in 381 (see *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* ed. Tanner et al., 31).

8. See Ep. 361 (Courtonne, 3:221, 31–35); my trans.: "I think it could be correctly said not that light is *identical* [*tauton*] with light, even though there is no difference in greatness or weakness, for each is in its own termination of being [*perigraphê ousias*]; but rather that light is *similar* [*homoios*] to light albeit unalterably, exactly, and according to being' [*homoion de kat' ousian akribôs aparallaktôs*]." Compare this translation with *Saint Basil,* trans. Deferrari, 4:335 and Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 39. On the authenticity of Basil's correspondence with Apollinaris, see Prestige's work just mentioned and de Riedmatten, "La Correspondance" 7 (1956): 199–210; 8 (1957): 53–70.

9. Ep. 9, 3 (Courtonne, 1:39, 16–18); trans. Deferrari, 1:99 (altered).

Ep. 361 (ca. 360) to Apollinaris places Basil firmly in the homoiousian camp.[10] In Ep. 9 Basil communicates to Maximus his private view that *homoousios* is less open to perversion than *homoios kat' ousian,* thus indicating his change of mind. In *Contra Eunomium* he uses *homoousios* once in a theological sense but clearly prefers to use *homoios* and cognates to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son. Discerning the exact theological import of Ep. 9 and *Contra Eunomium* is complicated by the scholarly disagreement over which came first.

Paul Fedwick, representing current scholarly consensus, dates *Contra Eunomium* to 364 and Ep. 9 to 360–62. If Fedwick is right, then Basil's "conversion" to *homoousios* would have remained private, for he uses the term only once theologically in *Contra Eunomium* while using *homoios* and its cognates many times. Furthermore, *Contra Eunomium* would have the odd position of belonging in its content to the first, homoiousian stage in the development of Basil's Trinitarian thought in spite of the fact that Basil in his mind had moved on to the second, homoousian stage in his theological development. According to this chronology, Basil appears inconsistent, if not disingenuous.

Fedwick's chronology, though, is not the only one. Thomas Kopecek places *Contra Eunomium* as early as 360. He does not comment on the date of Ep. 9, but his dating of *Contra Eunomium* makes it possible, if not probable, that it was written before Ep. 9. If Ep. 9 was written after *Contra Eunomium,* then Ep. 9 marks not only a private but also a public change on Basil's part. If *Contra Eunomium* is older, then it unambiguously belongs to the first stage in Basil's Trinitarian development, and he does not contradict publicly what he holds privately. According to this chronology, in the early 360s Basil would have steadily progressed toward Nicene orthodoxy.

10. Prestige dates Ep. 361 earlier, to the fall of 359, written by Basil from the Council of Seleucia. According to Prestige, Basil wrote asking about the theological terms under discussion at the Council; see Prestige, *St. Basil the Great,* 7. De Riedmatten, however, dates Ep. 361 to after Constantinople 360, between 360 and 362. As de Riedmatten writes, "L'allusion au départ de Grégroire de Nazianze, retourné auprès de ses parents, suggère que la lettre été écrite du Pont, entre 360 et 362" (de Riedmatten,"La Correspondance," 59). Kopecek rightly sides with de Riedmatten "for Ep. 361 was, in part, concerned with the rejection of the term essence *(ousia).* Now it is true that the Acacian compromise formula of Seleucia, 359 did reject homoousion and homoiousion (as well as anomoion = unlike), but it said nothing about *ousia* itself. This would seem to substantiate a date after Constantinople, 360, which specifically rejected *ousia*" (Kopecek, *A History,* 362–63, n. 2). Though de Riedmatten and Kopecek have the stronger argument, neither directly addresses Prestige's arguments for the earlier date. According to Prestige, Basil's calling Apollinaris "accessible" is a reference to his location in Laodicea in relation to Seleucia.

The arguments for the dating of these works ought to be reconsidered, as well as the theological implications of the dating.

The Date of *Contra Eunomium*

Basil wrote *Contra Eunomium* as a response to Eunomius' *Apology,* which was delivered at the council that met in Constantinople in 359 and was published a year later.[11] Basil, too, was at this council but he fled, intimidated by a debate that had been arranged between him and Aëtius of Antioch, a man of substantial rhetorical abilities.[12]

The date of *Contra Eunomium* is disputed, and the dispute centers around the conflicting evidence of two of Basil's letters, Ep. 223 and 20. Ep. 223 appears to allude to Basil's work against Eunomius and yields a date of 364. Ep. 20 specifically mentions the work, but seems to yield a date of 362.

Fedwick, as mentioned, maintains that *Contra Eunomium* was written in 364: "the work was dictated rather in a hurry before the Synod

11. See Eunomius, *Lib. Apol.,* trans. and ed. Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works.* On the date of Eunomius' *Apology* see Wickham, "The Date of Eunomius' *Apology,*" 231–40. Wickham refined the work of Franz Diekamp (Diekamp, "Literargeschichtliches," 1–13) by arguing that Eunomius delivered his *Apology* in Constantinople in 360 but not at his trial before Eudoxius and not in response to an organized revolt against him; see Wickham, "The Date of Eunomius' *Apology,*" 232–34. Kopecek has refined this judgment: "Wickham has overlooked one crucial point: there were two councils held in Constantinople in winter, 359/360, not one—the first met in December and a second met in January. Wickham seems to have been unaware of the first and, consequently, wrongly assumed that Eunomius's *Apologia* was given at the January council" (Kopecek, *A History,* 305). The December council of 359 better suits the fact that Basil was present; that Eunomius attacked homoiousian theology, the proponents of which capitulated by the end of the council by signing the revised Dated Creed, thus making Eunomius' invective out of place at Constantinople, for his enemy had already acknowledged defeat; and, finally, that Eunomius' *Apology* uses the term *ousia* which Constantinople 360 banned. It is safe to assume that Eunomius did not violate this proscription, especially after being elevated to the See of Cyzicus; see ibid. On the theology of Eunomius, see Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus;* Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la trinité,* 19–53; and Wiles, "Eunomius: Dialectician or Defender," 157–72.

12. See Philostorgius, *H. E.* 4, 12 (GCS, 57:64, 5–26); trans. Walford, 467–68: "These [Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius of Sebaste] then had a great number of supporters present and among them a second Basil, who even at that time was only of the order of deacon; he was superior to many in his powers of speech, though from natural timidity and shyness he shrunk from public discussions. . . . Moreover, Basil and his partisans, when they saw Aetius pitted against him as his adversary, in fear of his eloquence, avowed that it was indecorous for bishops to contend with a deacon concerning the doctrines of the faith." See also Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1, 9, trans. Moore; Ogle and Wilson, *Against Eunomius,* 43.

of Lampsacus met in the fall."[13] His evidence here is Ep. 223 wherein Basil vents his feelings about his soured friendship with Eustathius of Sebaste. Basil writes, "And at Eusinoe, when you, about to set out for Lampsacus with several bishops, summoned me, was not our conversation about faith? And all the time were not your short-hand writers present as I dictated objections to the heresy."[14] Jean Gribomont holds a position similar to Fedwick's, though he mistakenly gives 365 as the date of *Contra Eunomium* and the Synod of Lampsacus.[15] But it is not at all clear that the heresy to which Basil refers is Eunomius'. In fact, the context indicates that "the heresy" is Apollinaris'.

Basil's Ep. 223 is his attempt to defend himself against the accusations made against him by Eustathius of Sebaste and his followers. He had been quite close to Eustathius and seems to have seen him as God's answer to his prayer for guidance in the teachings of religion and the practice of the ascetic life.[16] In the early 370s, Basil traveled to Armenia with a commission from the emperor, Valens, to strengthen the churches there. On the same trip, at the request of Meletius of Antioch (now exiled to Getasa) and Theodotus of Nicopolis, Basil tried to address a problem that had arisen with Eustathius' teaching on the Holy Spirit, but to no avail. In the end, Basil was forced to condemn Eustathius' teaching in no uncertain terms, and Eustathius himself made attacks upon Basil's orthodoxy. Eustathius had circulated a letter alleged to have been written by Basil to Apollinaris, with the intention of implicating Basil in Apollinaris' supposed theological error, Sabellianism.[17] This, then, is the heresy of which Basil writes in Ep. 223, the heresy to which Basil dictated objections in the presence of Eustathius. These objections, Basil thinks, render Eustathius' charge groundless.

Basil himself, however, associates his dictated objections with the Synod of Lampsacus, and those in Lampsacus did not concern themselves with Apollinaris. Socrates, the orthodox Church historian commissioned to pick up where Eusebius had left off, relates that the Synod of Lampsacus was a homoiousian council concerned above all with the rejection of the Creed of the Synod of Rimini and the "Arian"

13. Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 10–11, n. 57.
14. Ep. 223, 5 (Courtonne, 3:14, 5–9); trans. Deferrari, 3:303.
15. Gribomont, "Les succès des Pères grecs," 31.
16. See Ep. 223, 2 (Courtonne, 3:10, 1–10); trans. Deferrari, 3:291–93.
17. See Ep. 129 and 131.

thought that the loose language of this Creed protected.[18] The synod sent Eustathius of Sebaste, Theophilus of Castabala, and Silvanus of Tarsus to the West seeking doctrinal union. They wanted to meet with Pope Liberius, who at first declined to meet with them because they were "Arians" who rejected the Nicene Creed. Eustathius and company "replied that by change of sentiment they had acknowledged the truth, having long since renounced the Anomoean Creed, and avowed the Son to be in every way 'like the Father': moreover that they considered the terms 'like' *(homoios)* and *homoousios* to have precisely the same import."[19] They then confessed their beliefs in writing including the Creed of Nicaea itself. The anti-Arian thrust of the Synod of Lampsacus has no doubt led scholars to the conclusion that Basil's dictated objections are his own anti-Arian work *Contra Eunomium.* But it does not make any sense for Basil to mention an anti-Arian work of his to clear himself of a charge of Sabellianism by association with Apollinaris. Moreover, the written statement of the representatives of Lampsacus to Liberius condemns, albeit briefly, "the same heresy of Sabellius, the Patripassians, the Marcionites, the Photinians, the Marcellians, that of Paul of Samosata, and those who countenance such tenets."[20] While Lampsacus was predominantly anti-Arian, it also condemned the opposite error of Sabellianism. Perhaps, then, it is best to see Basil's dictated objections both as anti-Sabellian and as associated with Lampsacus.[21]

Kopecek, unlike Fedwick and others, dates *Contra Eunomium* to 360–62 by external evidence and narrows the range to 360–61 by internal evidence.[22] The most convincing of the arguments from external evidence centers around Ep. 20 (to Leontius the Sophist) in which, as just stated, Basil explicitly mentions his work against Eunomius, which he is sending to Leontius. So, if Ep. 20 can be dated with certainty, then so can *Contra Eunomium,* relative to Ep. 20.

Prudentius Maran argued that Ep. 20 was written at the beginning of Basil's presbyterate, which he dates to 364.[23] But, both Fedwick and

18. Socrates, *H. E.* 4, 12 (PG 67, 484B–485B); NPNF 2,2:100.

19. Ibid. (PG 67, 485B); NPNF 2,2:100–101.

20. Ibid., 4, 12; NPNF 2,2:101.

21. Basil did write an anti-Sabellian work (his twenty-fourth homily) sometime between 363 and 378, but probably closer to 378; see *Homilia contra Sabellianos, et Arium, et Anomoeos* (PG 31, 600–17).

22. Kopecek, *A History,* 364–72.

23. See Maran, *Vita S. Basilii Magni,* xxxix.

Kopecek persuasively argue against Maran's date of 364 for Basil's ordination.[24] The thrust of their argument centers on a letter of Gregory of Nazianzus. Gregory wrote Ep. 8 to Basil as a reply to Basil's letter (lost) notifying Gregory of his ordination.[25] Paul Gallay places this letter in 362; but Gallay simply follows LeNain de Tillemont here.[26] This date of 362 for Basil's ordination fits well with the other events of this period of his life, viz., the death of Dianius in 362 and the accession of Eusebius to the bishopric of Caesarea.

So, then, if (as Maran has it) Ep. 20 may be dated just after Basil's ordination, *Contra Eunomium* appears to have been written in or before 362. But the evidence that Ep. 20 may be so dated is ambiguous. The argument for placing Ep. 20 in 362, just after Basil's ordination, is derived from the excuse that Basil gives to Leontius for not writing. "In our case," Basil writes, "the *mass of business* in which we are now engaged might perhaps afford some excuse for our failure to write."[27] Basil adds the further reason that his "tiresome association with the vulgar" would make his letters unworthy of learned and eloquent men like Leontius.[28] But this evidence demands only that Basil wrote Ep. 20 after his ordination, not necessarily immediately after. In sum, Ep. 20 could have been written in 362 but also later.

Given the evidence (or lack thereof) of Ep. 223 and the fact that Ep. 20 may have been written after 362, *Contra Eunomium* may also be dated to after 362. Nevertheless, *Contra Eunomium* should be dated earlier rather than later in the 360s, for, as Tillemont reminds us, Gregory of Nyssa mentions that Eunomius took a long time to make his reply. Gregory writes: "when in long years he got the requisite amount of leisure, he was travailling over his work during all that interval with mightier pangs than those of the largest and the bulkiest beasts."[29] Basil admitted that *Contra Eunomium* was the first work of his ecclesiastical career. Basil says, "I must not behold my weakness in the matter and I must attempt to come to the aid of the truth and to refute the lie, although I am not practiced in this kind of work."[30] These words

24. See Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 7, n. 26, and Kopecek, *A History,* 366–67.
25. See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letters,* trans. Browne and Swallow, 448.
26. See Gallay, *Grégoire de Nazianze,* 73–74, and 252. See also Tillemont, *Mémoires.*
27. Ep. 20 (Courtonne, 1:50, 14–16); trans. Deferarri, 1:125 (my emphasis).
28. Ibid. (Courtonne, 1:50, 16–19).
29. *Con. Eun.* 1, 9; NPNF 2, 5:35. See de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour Servir,* 9, 2: 1038–42.
30. *Con. Eun.* 1, 1 (Sesboüé, 1:143, 14–21).

call for an earlier rather than a later date. Moreover, Kopecek has brought to light some other facts that demand a date early in the 360s. One is particularly persuasive. Eunomius had been awarded the See of Cyzicus—Basil called it the "prize" of his impiety—at the 360 Council in Constantinople. But it did not go well for Eunomius in Cyzicus: he was accused of heresy by his own clergy who complained in Constantinople to the disinterested Eudoxius and then to Constantius himself.[31] There was a trial in Constantinople in 361, and Eunomius seems to have been exonerated, but he resigned his see in Cyzicus because Eudoxius had asked him to sign the Homoian Creed of 360 and to subscribe to the exile of his master Aëtius; Eunomius refused and withdrew for the moment from ecclesiastical affairs.[32] Why would Basil fail to mention this fact in his invective against Eunomius' character at the beginning of *Contra Eunomium?* He calls Eunomius the enemy of the truth, a liar, ignorant, proud, two-faced, a blasphemer, and a confounder of the simple.[33] Why did he not also mention that Eunomius was so foul a man and taught so impious a doctrine that he was rejected by his own flock and was forced to yield his former "prize" as a just punishment? Perhaps it is because this had not yet happened when Basil was cataloguing Eunomius' personal and doctrinal defects.

The Date of Ep. 9 to Maximus

The date of Ep. 9 is pivotal in outlining the course of Basil's theological development because in it he reveals that he has changed his mind about how one should speak of and understand the relationship between the Father and the Son. Before Ep. 9 Basil's Trinitarian thought was marked not only by the preference for *homoiousios* but also by an aversion to *homoousios.* But in Ep. 9, Basil has changed his

31. See Theodoret, *H. E.* 2, 25; NPNF 2, 3:90–91.

32. See Philostorgius, *H. E.* 6, 1–3. Theodoret does not report the trial of Eunomius but only his falling out with the clergy of Cyzicus and their subsequent complaints before Constantius. He does, however, allude to the judgment of the synod that tried him. He says of Eunomius, "when his turn came he paid the penalty of his iniquity; he did not submit to the vote of the synod, but began to ordain bishops and presbyters, though himself deprived of his episcopal rank" (Theodoret, *H. E.* 2, 25; NPNF 2, 3:91). Thus, contradicting Philostorgius, Theodoret implies that the judgment went against Eunomius. See also Kopecek, *A History,* 392–400, though Kopecek does not take notice of, or explain, the at least apparent contradiction in the respective accounts of Philostorgius and Theodoret.

33. See *Con. Eun.* 1, 1.

mind on the appropriateness of the *homoousios* as a theological term.

It is clear from internal evidence that Basil wrote Ep. 9 to Maximus from Annesi, and Basil was at Annesi from 360–62 and 363–65.[34] Basil's mother and sister Macrina lived in the Pontus valley at Annesi, about 60 kilometers northeast of Caesarea and 20 kilometers south of the Black Sea. As mentioned, Basil fled the council that met at Constantinople in 359; he retreated to Annesi and broke off his relationship with Dianius who signed the Nicé-Constantinopolitan Creed. In the middle of 362, Basil returned to Caesarea and was reconciled with Dianius who died soon thereafter. Basil was ordained a presbyter by Dianius' successor, Eusebius, but soon had a falling out with him and once again retired to Annesi, remaining there until 365. Basil reveals whence he is writing Ep. 9 when he contrasts his remote setting to Maximus' life in the city. Basil regards "'life in oblivion' as among the highest of blessings."[35] He playfully boasts to Maximus: "Even though communities and cities, wherein you display your activities in accordance with virtue, suit best your life of activity, yet for contemplation and the exercises of the mind, whereby we are joined to God, solitude is an excellent co-worker; and here, at the edge of the world, we enjoy a solitude abundant and bountiful."[36] The "edge of the world" *(epi tês eschatias)* is certainly Annesi.

That Basil wrote Ep. 9 from Annesi dates it to either 360–62 or 363–65, and a date in the early 360s is corroborated by two other pieces of internal evidence. First, Basil makes mention of the "doctrine of unlikeness," writing that it "is now so noised about."[37] This comment would aptly describe either period for, though the Eunomians had by 361 become a sect, they remained very active in the promulgation of their doctrines.[38] Secondly, Basil alludes to the events that transpired

34. Fedwick assigns the letter to Basil's first stay in Annesi. See Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 7, n. 24: "The reasons for this date are not necessarily the arguments adduced by Maran, *Vita* 7.4, but the words *epi tês eschatias* (Courtonne, 1:40.33–34). Maran bases his chronology on parallels with the Ps.-Basil (= Evagrius) [Ep. 8], dated now in 379 (!). Nevertheless, besides the *C. Eun.* 1–3, [Ep. 9,2] (Courtonne, 1:38.5–6) is the only other early reference in Basil to the heresy of the Anomoeans from before 370." Most scholars follow Fedwick though Drecoll proposes a date of 363/64 (see n. 38 below).

35. Ep. 9, 3 (Courtonne, 1:40, 26–27); trans. Deferrari, 1:99.

36. Ibid. (Courtonne, 1:40, 29–35); trans. Deferrari, 1:101.

37. Ibid., 2 (Courtonne, 1:38, 5–7); trans. Deferrari 1:95.

38. See Kopecek, *A History,* 413–28. As mentioned, Drecoll dates Ep. 9 to 363/64, but he grounds this dating upon an interpretation of "the doctrine of the unlikeness which is now so noised about." Drecoll argues thus: "Zu einer Lokalisierung in Annisi paßt auch

in 360 in Constantinople. He writes, "if anyone eliminates the invariability [*aparallakton*] of the likeness, as those in Constantinople have done, I become suspicious of the expression, on the ground that it diminishes the glory of the Only-Begotten."[39] Basil is certainly right about the opposition to *aparallakton.* In fact, according to the account of Philostorgius, Constantius banished Aëtius for maintaining that the Son is like the Father without any difference *(aparallaktôs)*.[40] Basil's reference to "those in Constantinople" seems to imply a date closer to 359: it is as though he is recalling a recent event.

There is one other piece of internal evidence that must be mentioned: Basil ended his letter to Maximus saying that he has decided not to make his opinion on *homoousios* public.[41] This fits better with a date before the death of Constantius for two reasons. First, Basil would have had good reason to hold his convictions privately, for at that time *ousia* (and its cognates) and *aparallaktôs* were banned. After the death of Constantius, though, Basil had nothing to fear from imperial authorities—from 361 to 363 Julian the Apostate had maintained a policy of religious toleration, recalling all exiled bishops in an effort to throw the Church deeper into internal struggles, and from 363 to 365 the emperor Jovian had supported the Homoousians. Only with the accession of the "Arian" emperor Valens did Basil again have reason to fear the opposition of the secular authorities, and this fear Basil later proved to lack in a direct confrontation with Valens in Caesarea.

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die Angabe, daß die anhomöische *asebeia nun* 'herumgetratscht' *(perithruleisthai)* werde (*Ep. 9,* 2/4f.), denn während seines Pontusaufenthaltes hat Basilius an AE gearbeitet, während in der Julianzeit die Anhomöer damit begannen, eine eigene Kirchenstruktur vorzubereiten. *Ep. 9* ist so wahrscheinlich auf den Annisiaufenthalt zu datieren, aus inhaltlichen Gründen nach *Ep. 361* anzusetzen, also 363/364" (Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung,* 38). Basil's reference to Anhomoianism may refer to these events (his working on *Contra Eunomium* and the Eunomians' efforts to place competing bishops in many sees), but the Neo-Arians were certainly making "noise" earlier in the 360s. It should be mentioned that Drecoll (ibid., 45–46) places *Contra Eunomium* in 364 based upon the evidence of Ep. 223 and Basil's mention there of the Synod of Lampsacus.

39. Ep. 9, 3 (Courtonne, 1:39, 11–14); trans. Deferrari, 1:99.

40. See Philostorgius *H. E.* 4, 12; and Kopecek, *A History,* 349–51. When Aëtius claims that the Son is "invariably" like the Father, he means by "Father" not "God," but "the will of God"; the Son remains unlike God in essence—this last position Theodoret holds as the reason for Aëtius' exile; see Theodoret, *H. E.* 2, 23 (NPNF 2, 3:88); and Kopecek, *A History,* 348–49.

41. See Ep. 9, 3 (Courtonne, 1:39, 18–21); trans. Deferrari, 1:99 (my emphasis): "But why do you not visit us, dear friend, that we may discuss such matters in each other's company, and not entrust subjects of such importance to lifeless words, especially since *I have definitely decided not to make my own convictions public?*"

Of course, Basil may have had a motive other than persecution at the hands of imperial authority to keep his convictions private. After all, one must ask what the emperor could have done to Basil while he was at Annesi. Certainly Basil's letter writing here, even using banned words (as he did in writing *Contra Eunomium*), would not have drawn the watchful eye of imperial authorities. Perhaps fear of persecution explains Basil's reluctance to make his conviction public, but one could imagine explanations as likely. One might speculate, for example, that Basil did not want friends like Eustathius and Basil of Ancyra to learn of his newfound approbation of *homoousios*—which they did not share—before he had the opportunity to explain himself to them at greater length. While the evidence is not overwhelming, it nonetheless calls for a date for Ep. 9 in 360–62 rather than 363–65.

Conclusion

Both Ep. 9 and *Contra Eunomium* were written earlier rather than later in the 360s. The date of 364 for *Conta Eunomium* is too late, and Ep. 9 fits best in Basil's first stay at Annesi (360–62). The evidence does not indicate, however, which was written first. But in the absence of evidence to the contrary, why should one not assume Basil's theological consistency?

Dating *Contra Eunomium* after Ep. 9, and thereby rendering Basil inconsistent or dishonest, entails some serious difficulties. If before he wrote *Contra Eunomium* in 360–62 he thought that *homoousios* was less open to perversion than even *homoios aparallaktôs kat' ousian,* why then in *Contra Eunomium* did he use *homoios* and its cognates nearly always without adding *aparallaktôs?* Someone might respond that Basil was writing this work in the presence of or under the auspices of Eustathius who would not have approved of *homoousios,* and so Basil avoided the term. But would Eustathius have objected to *aparallaktôs* too? And would he have countenanced even the single use of *homoousios* found in *Contra Eunomium?*

Although it makes better sense to assume that Basil first wrote *Contra Eunomium* and then Ep. 9, his "conversion" to *homoousios* in the latter should not be invested with a significance that it did not have. It is clear that Basil did not view his change of mind as having the irrevocable and uncompromising character that may be associated with conversion properly speaking. His "conversion" from homoiousianism

to homoousianism bears little similarity to, say, a conversion from paganism to Christianity. For Basil, it was acceptable to use *homoios* and its cognates after his "conversion"—and he did so, using *homoousios* in conjunction with *homoiotês*[42]—but for a converted pagan, it would be altogether unacceptable to sacrifice once again to the old gods. *Homoios* language, for him, was not necessarily blasphemous; it was only so in a context in which it admitted of an interpretation that degraded the Son.

The assumption that *Contra Eunomium* was written before Ep. 9 makes Basil's theological development easier to understand. He progressed from a rejection of *homoousios* in Ep. 361, to a hesitant toleration of it in *Contra Eunomium,* to a full acceptance of it in Ep. 9. Contrariwise, Basil's confidence in *homoios* language gradually eroded. In Ep. 361 it is the only language suitable to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son; in *Contra Eunomium* it dominates but has lost its hegemony; in Ep. 9 it is acceptable only if taken in the same sense as *homoousios,* which would now measure other words and legitimate their use. This analysis also accords with Basil's own description of his theological development

> I never held erroneous opinions about God, or, being otherwise minded, unlearned them later. Nay, the conception of God which I received in childhood . . . this, developed, have I held within me; for I did not change from one opinion to another with the maturity of reason, but I perfected the principles handed down to me. . . . For just as the seed, in developing, becomes larger instead of small, but is the same in itself, not changing in kind but being perfected in development, so I consider that also in me the same doctrine has been developed though progress, and what now is mine has not taken the place of what existed in the beginning.[43]

42. See Ep. 236, for example.
43. Ep. 223, 3; trans. Deferrari, 3:299.

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